WITH THE SIMPLE-HEARTED

BY ELIZABETH WATERHOUSE

BV
4309
W38
1904
GTU
Storage

Library of the
Church Divinity School
of the Pacific

No. _____ Class _____
Ex Dono The Rt. Rev. E.L. Parsons
_____ 1961 _____

26w
639

Library of the
Church Divinity School
of the Pacific

her

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/withsimplehearte0000eliz

WITH THE SIMPLE-HEARTED

A LITTLE BOOK OF LIFE AND DEATH

*Selected and arranged by*
ELIZABETH WATERHOUSE.
With a Frontispiece from a Painting by G. F. WATTS. Fifth Edition. Small Pott 8vo. Cloth, 1s. 6d. net. Leather, 2s. 6d. net.

GRADUATE THEOLOGICAL UNION
LIBRARY
1962

# WITH THE SIMPLE-HEARTED

## LITTLE HOMILIES TO WOMEN IN COUNTRY PLACES

BY

ELIZABETH WATERHOUSE

METHUEN & CO
36 ESSEX STREET W.C.
LONDON

BV
4309
W38
1904

*First Published in 1904*

XC
W326w

TO

THE WELL-BELOVED

THE CHIEF MUSICIAN UPON NEHILOTH

AND TO

MY FRIENDS IN THE HOUSE BY

THE CHERRY-TREE

36639

# PREFACE

I VENTURE to send out into life these homely words, in the hope that by their very humbleness they may enter low doors where high teaching of ordinance or doctrine could not come in.

There must be, I think, many gatherings of simple souls of the kind called "Mothers' Meetings," where neither reader nor hearers are ready for teaching belonging specially to this or that section of the Church Universal, but who may like to dwell together a little while on thoughts of the Master, in a region where these distinctions are not.

The Homilies are short, but perhaps they may serve, as they did in their first use, as little harbours from which the words went forth and to which they returned, guided sometimes in the course they took by the listening faces, which

seem so needful a part of any teaching that the written thought must always be poorer than the spoken.

Poor, too, seem these lifeless pages without the sun-drawn scent of the old box-hedges coming through the open door in summer, or the wood-smoke in winter from the great hearth-fire where the oldest and youngest of our company gather in the chimney corner.

But such as they are I offer them, earnestly desiring a blessing upon all to whom these words may come.

E. W.

YATTENDON, 1904

# CONTENTS


| | PAGE |
|---|---|
| A New Year . . . | 1 |
| The Outgoings of the Morning and the Evening . . . | 9 |
| One Day without Jesus, Three Days seeking Him . . | 19 |
| A New World—Spring . . | 27 |
| Busy Hands—Beautiful Hands . | 35 |
| Thoughts and Words—Whitsuntide | 43 |
| Uplifting (in dark and rainy weather after drought) . . . | 49 |
| The Sorrow of God . . | 55 |
| Lavender and Lilies . . | 61 |
| The Presence of God . . | 69 |
| Orchards . . . . | 77 |
| Savourless Salt . . . | 85 |
| The Looking-Glass of Liberty . | 91 |
| Stones made Bread . . . | 99 |
| The Eleventh Hour . . | 105 |
| Sin unto Death, Sin not unto Death | 113 |
| The Healing Spring . . | 119 |

PAGE

The Sheep-fold . . . 129
Murmuring . . . . 137
Christ the Creator—Harvest Time 145
Assurance . . . . 153
Lystra . . . . 161
Pay Me that Thou owest . . 167
The Well-Side . . . 175
Offending the Little Ones . 185
The Breath of the Lord—Autumn 191
Not Far . . . . 197
Christ Sorrowing . . . 205
The Grace of Jesus Christ . 217
Whatsoever He saith unto You . 223
Love and Fear—The Lady Julian . 231

# A NEW YEAR

*Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men. For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night. Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up. In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth. For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled. Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance. For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told. The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath. So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. Return, O Lord, how long? and let it repent thee concerning*

*thy servants. O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil. Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.*

PSALM XC.

## A NEW YEAR

THE beginning of a New Year is always a very solemn time, and as we go about wishing one another "A happy New Year," this seems to me almost a sign that we feel it so. It is as if people walking in the dark on a strange road kept calling to one another to keep up their courage. For we are in one sense in the dark and on a strange road, we do not know where it is leading us, we do not see one step of the onward way, and we want to be cheered by those around us.

But we want more than this, we want a guide, and we want a home.

A guide? We have but to put out a hand in the dark and lay it on His hand who walks beside us unseen. *This God is our God for ever and ever*, through all the changes of time, through all the eternal years; and *He will be our guide even unto death.*

And the home? *Lord, Thou hast been*

*our dwelling-place from all generations.* How glorious a dwelling-place! *In Him we live and move.* Then why is not all well with us? We dwell in a palace of infinite splendour, in *Him*, why should we feel as wanderers?

*All our days are passed away in Thy wrath. Who knoweth the power of Thine anger? We are consumed by Thine anger.* Such thoughts come over and over again in this beautiful, sad psalm, and show us why we are strangers in our dwelling-place.

But must it be so? Must our New Year find us sad pilgrims?

Let us read what St Paul says:—

*If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away, behold all things are become new, and all things are of God.*

If any man be in Christ—that is the home-coming. The new creature is at home in His dwelling-place, where all things are new, all things of God. Shall we not enter in? and entering, shall we not be His helpers who makes all things new? a new bit of the world all about us this New Year—lit by His light. Oh,

let us think of it. This very place made new, made holy and glad by the new life of His servants.

*So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. Satisfy us early with Thy mercy that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.* Does not that prayer show us how we are to help Him in making all things new, numbering our days, applying our hearts to wisdom, to wise and holy thoughts of our work, our life, our God.

*Satisfied with His mercy.* Ah, who should not be satisfied with so rich a gift?

And *rejoicing and being glad all our days.* It is the faces of those who are glad in Him that help to make all things new.

Some of us think sadly perhaps, as we grow old, of that other verse of the psalm —*The days of our years are threescore years and ten, and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow.* We know how true this is when we are weary with the years. We think sadly, perhaps, too of those other words— *It is soon cut off and we fly away.* Another year, we say, and I may have flown away.

Away? But whither? *Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling-place*—so we can but fly in and in, closer to the inmost sanctuary, closer to the Heart of Love.

Lord, Thou art our dwelling-place, make us even now at home in Thee.

# THE OUTGOINGS OF THE MORNING AND THE EVENING

*Thou makest the outgoings of the morning ana the evening to rejoice.* PSALM lxv. 8.

*It is a good thing to show forth thy loving-kindness in the morning and thy faithfulness every night.* PSALM xcii. 1, 2.

## THE OUTGOINGS OF THE MORNING AND THE EVENING

DO you think sometimes when you see the beautiful colours in the sky before the sun rises, or the wonderful glory of a sunset with the red clouds high up over head, and the long yellow light that stays, and stays, above the hills when the sun has gone, do you ever think that God is making the outgoing of the morning and the evening to rejoice?

The busy day has its cares and work which make us forget our best things sometimes, but how good the morning is! A new day full of hope that all will be well. The beautiful world around us wakes to life, the fresh sweet air stirs our hearts to gladness. *Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.* And if there be joy shall there not be thankfulness too? It is a good thing to give thanks and to show forth His loving-kindness in the morning.

There must be sad mornings to some of us, I know—times when we wake to remember a sorrow that sleep had scarcely hidden, when we wake to a day we dread, and say, *Would God it were evening*—on such mornings may God comfort us all, as He will.

But I think for most of us, at most times, what I have said is true—*the outgoings of the morning rejoice.*

And when the day's work is nearly over, how sweet the evening time! the twilight for thinking a little before the candles are lit, when the *outgoing of the evening* has done its *rejoicing* in the beautiful sky.

Don't let us take these things without a thought of God, without the *good thing* which makes them happy.

I have been thinking in many ways about these outgoings of the morning and evening. We speak of Life as one long day. The evening of Life is the time of old age. Does God make that outgoing —the outgoing of that evening to rejoice?

I think he does. How peaceful is the time when the busiest cares of life are

over — children grown up to men and women able to care for the old, who no longer need work for them, children's children bringing new happiness without the old carefulness! And we all know how much more pleasure old people can take in little things than the middle-aged; they are like children in this—pleased by the birds and flowers, just by sitting in the sun, or peacefully at the fire-side. I think if old people will let Him, God will always make the outgoings of their evening to rejoice.

And children, the morning spirits? We think of them as happy—they ought to be—and I think most mothers try to make them so, but perhaps they do not always think enough about the duty of making life as full of gladness, as full of sweet memories for the little ones as they can; of helping the dear Father of us all to make the outgoing of their morning—the morning of their lives—to rejoice.

The morning of their lives, and the morning and the evening of their days. And now I am coming to what I really want most to say to you—though very

likely you may not need it, you may already be doing, better than I can tell you, what I shall speak of.

And first as to the children's mornings, the little time before they go to school. I have always thought it a pleasant way in a family, that partings, even for a few hours, should have their tender words of farewell, a blessing on the time when those who love will be away from one another.

I know that it may be sometimes rather a hurried time before the children go to school, especially when they have far to walk, but let them have a happy breakfast, and let them go with the feeling that their mother's kiss and blessing will not only cheer them till they see her again, but keep them from any naughty words or ways for her sake—an *outgoing* shone upon by love.

And then the evenings. "The Children's Hour."

I think it is worth a great deal of thought about the day's work, that the mother may be free for her children the last hour before bed-time, and that it may

be an hour they look forward to and remember.

There are so many hours in the day in which the mother is free from all care of her children, while they are at school, so many hours in which she has not the happiness of being with them, that I am sure many mothers do feel that evening hour to be a very precious one. It is good that all should feel it so, and it needs sometimes a little thought to make it all that it may be.

If the mother remembers the things that she liked to do when she was a child, or that she would have liked to do, or to have, if her childhood had been happier, how many nice little plans she can make for their evening pleasure. She may help them to "make something out of nothing" —always a joy to children—a dolls' house out of an old box, or clothes for their dolls out of old scraps. She may read them a story while they are at work, or let one of them read to her if she is obliged to be sewing herself; or they can do a little gardening with her in summer, or go with her into the woods for flowers or

blackberries. But indeed I know you will think far better than I could do what these evening pleasures should be, and as I said before, I expect many of you already try to make the most of this evening-time with your children.

But when I read of the kind people who take a great deal of trouble to give children "Happy Evenings" away from their homes, a very good thing where the home is one miserable room in a dirty London street, I can't help thinking how much better, how much holier a thing, a happy evening in the home may be, if the mother will make it so.

I have not forgotten the fathers, but I think when they have done their day's work, it is well not to *expect* anything from them. If the father is enjoying his pipe in a winter evening, he will like to see the children happy, and he will admire the mother who makes them so; and in longer days, when he is working in the garden, he will perhaps like just to be left to himself, or to let one of the boys help him.

Sometimes before the children go to

bed you might all sing a hymn together or read a few verses of a psalm, or a simple prayer, and so with thoughts of Him who loved the children and who made the day and the night, the outgoing of their evening would rejoice.

# ONE DAY WITHOUT JESUS, THREE DAYS SEEKING HIM

*And when he was twelve years old, they went up after the custom of the feast; and when they had fulfilled the days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and his parents knew it not; but supposing him to be in the company, they went a day's journey; and they sought for him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance, and when they found him not, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking for him. And it came to pass, after three days, they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions, and all that heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. And when they saw him they were astonished; and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be in my Father's house? And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and he was subject unto them; and his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and men.*

LUKE ii. 42-52.

## ONE DAY WITHOUT JESUS, THREE DAYS SEEKING HIM

WE are told so little about the childhood of Jesus that this one story we must all remember and love.

A beautiful story, but one that always makes a mother's heart ache for that Mother, the mother of the Holiest Motherhood.

Let us think of it a little. First we see the great company of pilgrims setting out from their homes at Nazareth to go up to the Passover Feast at Jerusalem. People from other villages, such as Capernaum and Bethsaida, perhaps would join them on the way, friends not often met, with whom it would be pleasant to talk as they went along; but all the days of this journey would be looked upon as a holy time, and often as they walked, or when they rested for the night, and in the heat of the day, the pilgrims would sing together, to the music of flute-players, the psalms "of the going up," "psalms of

degrees," as they are called in our Bibles. They are the psalms from the 120th to 134th, which were written to be sung at such times. It is pleasant to think of some of the beautiful words they sang, for these are among the sweetest and most comforting in our Bibles. They sang, *The Lord is thy keeper—the Lord is thy shade—the sun shall not smite thee by day.* How happy a song for the hot noon when they rested! *The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in.* A trusting thought for the timid ones who were leaving their quiet home among the hills! And then, *I was glad when they said to me—Let us go into the house of the Lord—our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.* They sang of the mountains they would soon see standing round about the Holy City, and of the Lord who is thus round about His people shutting them in from fear and danger. They sang of house and home, of wife and children and grandchildren, and of the love of brethren; and ended with a last triumphant word about the song which by day and by night was always to be heard in the sanctuary.

And as they went, if not before, one thinks the mother of Jesus must have told Him the wonderful things which she had *kept and pondered in her heart*—the story of the Shepherds in the Bethlehem fields, of the Wise Men who followed the star to His cradle, and of the words which the aged Simeon, and Anna the prophetess, had spoken of Him in His babyhood in that very temple to which they were going.

We cannot guess the sacred thoughts that filled His heart when Mount Zion came in sight, with its white marble terraces rising one above another, and the shining temple high over these, but we know that to be *about His Father's business* was His one high desire.

Then came the solemn feast with sacrifices and offerings and all the great ceremonial, with much outward show of worship, it may be with much real worship; but perhaps the worshippers did not all realise, as we so often do not, how much closer our Lord should be than any of these things, our hand in His, our heart one with Him. So at the end of the

appointed days, even Mary, the pure and holy of heart, to whom that temple must have brought memories of wonder and joy, could turn from all her worshipping —as people may turn from services, whether in great cathedrals or churches or humble village chapels—not with the hand of the boy Jesus in hers—just *supposing* that He was of the company—and at the end of the day, when the pilgrim families were settling to rest for the night, then only she found that He was not with them.

What she missed that morning she had to seek in three long anxious, sorrowing days. Where had He strayed? Had He been stolen away? Had He fallen down some precipice, or been torn by wild beasts —this Child above all children so wonderfully given her? She *sought Him sorrowing*.

We know how she found Him sitting among the wise Jews, who wondered at His questions. Had He asked them perhaps what the Slain lamb of the Passover meant, and how any sacrifice could make evil hearts clean?

The story brings us many thoughts—but let us keep this one.

That no day should begin without at least a moment in which we lay our hand in His, not content with *supposing* that He is of our company, but knowing it. One day spent without prayer may bring us three days—ah, who can tell how many days?—of sorrowing.

And so with our times of worshipping in church or chapel.

I once read a story of a poor girl who went into a church and found a seat near the door, and because she was very tired and had not sat down to rest for a long time, she fell asleep, and only just awoke to hear the blessing at the end of the service. But through the goodness of God that blessing *filled* her heart, it seemed all that she needed, and she went away rested, comforted, yes, more than that, uplifted into great joy by those words.

She did not go away supposing that Jesus was with her—*she knew.*

May He, the dear Master and the Loving Friend, be always of our little company — as He has promised to be with those who meet in His name.

# A NEW WORLD—SPRING

*Lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, amd the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.*

SONG OF SOLOMON ii. 11-13.

## A NEW WORLD—SPRING

IF we could have lived till we were old enough to *think* before we had seen and heard, and felt and smelt the beauty of the spring, we should be full of wonder. We should be overcome with an almost trembling astonishment at such a miracle. We should fall on our knees at once and worship Him who made it. The hard frozen ground, the dry and lifeless-looking branches of the trees are touched by His hand and know when it is time to awake. The ground is covered with grass and flowers, the trees are dressed in their beautiful green clothing, and the air is full of a warm buzzing of bees, and of sweet scents, and the singing of birds. Even to our touch everything is changed and soft.

But do we wonder and worship? Do we think of it every day as a great marvel done in our sight, and does it make us almost tremble and yet make our hearts beat quicker with the great joy of it all,

the joy of feeling that the God who loves us is close at hand working this wonder?

To some I am sure it must be so, but perhaps you have not all thought much about it, you have not thought of it as a duty to delight in the beauty of the world, as a daily service that we owe to Him.

Or perhaps you may say you are too busy to have time for these things.

But don't you think God made the world beautiful for some purpose?

Even a very busy woman, I think, might spend a minute at her door on a spring morning, and say to herself, "All this is a message from my Father in Heaven to me," and take this thought with her to the wash-tub, and her cooking and cleaning and sewing. And when she felt the breath of the spring through her open window, or heard the birds singing, the thought would come again like the voice of God Himself.

A few minutes spent in watching a sunrise—dawn and sunrise come sometimes when the day's work *must* begin, but how beautiful they are, and how full of thoughts of the glory and the love of

God!—or a few minutes, more easily spent, in looking at a sunset; a few at the garden gate seeing the white wonder of the moonlight, or listening to a nightingale—a little thought given to the flowers as they come—I think all these things are, or should be, a part of our religion, don't you? There are some very wonderful words in the Bible about Christ being with God in the creation. *By the word of God were the heavens made.* Christ is the word of God. *Without Him was not anything made.* He who came into the world to save us was with God in the beginning. Don't you think He would have us love the beauty of His earth and live in the joy of it? It was He who told us to look at the lilies, and not to think only of our food and our clothes.

And if we read the Psalms and see how the shepherd David and other writers of the Psalms rejoiced in the works of God, we shall understand how this joy in Nature is indeed a part of our worship—our service to Him.

The 104th Psalm, you remember, is just a long story of the pleasant earth—the

streams, the trees, the birds and beasts, the coming of day and night, the sea, and the wind, and the changing moon, and then—*my meditation of Him shall be sweet, I will be glad in the Lord.* Sweet glad thoughts of the world and of Him who made and still makes it.

And I think that a woman who so loves the beauty of the world, whose heart is so full of it that she speaks of it to her children, and leads them too to rejoice in it, becomes herself a part of it, reflects even in her face the joy of the spring, the tenderness of autumn, the brightness of the dawns and the sunsets—and not, as some do, just their worries and cares. Her children will remember her afterwards when they too are glad in God's works.

I will read you a verse out of a poem describing such a woman, which I think you will not find hard to understand :—

"The Stars of midnight shall be dear
To her, and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place,
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face."

The faces of some of us may be old and tired, worn with the years, and with work and pain: but the smile of a lover of God's sweet world may make them beautiful still with the light of Love and Worship.

# BUSY HANDS—BEAUTIFUL HANDS

*Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life. She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands. She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar. She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens. She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard. She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms. She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night. She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff. She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy. She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet. She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple. Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land. She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant. Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice*

*in time to come. She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her. Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all. Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.*

PROVERBS XXXI. 10-31.

## BUSY HANDS—BEAUTIFUL HANDS

WHAT I have just read to you is, as you know, from the Old Testament. They are the words of King Solomon, or more likely of some one who wrote at a later time and imagined what the thoughts of the wisest of men had been.

And we find thoughts about the work of our hands in the New Testament too. St Paul wrote to people in his letters about "working with their hands the thing that is good," and to work with their own hands so that those who were not Christians might see that Christians were diligent and honest, and did not think that, because they were religious people, they need not work like others and do common things well.

I think we sometimes separate our lives too much into our working times and our worshipping times. There is an old

saying that "work is worship." Well, it isn't always so. We may be going about our work rather grumblingly; we are behind hand with it perhaps; we are hindered by other people; children perhaps are specially fretty on a busy day, and our backs ache, and our feet are tired, and there is no thought of God in our hearts all day, till we come to Him at night and tell Him how cross we have been and ask Him to forgive us before we fall asleep. Work is not worship then, is it?

But I want us to see how it may be worship, so that we may do it, "as unto the Lord," as St Paul says.

It isn't easy, I know, for I work hard as well as you.

But I think perhaps we don't pray enough about the common things; we don't pray enough among the common things; we don't often enough lift up our hearts to God when our hands are busy, and say, *Prosper Thou my handiwork.* He can put quite another spirit into all we do, if we ask Him. He can give us thoughts of Him while we are busy, that will make the work we do seem beautiful to us. We

can't all of us make beautiful things such as King Solomon praises the virtuous woman for doing, coverings of tapestry and clothing of silk and purple; but God can make the common daily work, scrubbing, or washing, or mending, or cooking, or whatever it be, more beautiful than tapestry or silk or purple, if He fills us with lovely thoughts of Him all the time, don't you think so?

And if the work is hard, the work of our hands, we can think of His hands pierced for us, and thank Him for His holy death upon the Cross, by which our souls live.

And then when our work for the day is over, we can do as St Paul says again and pray, *lifting up holy hands* in faithful prayer—hands that have done their daily task as in His presence, and are ready to be folded in His peace at night.

I daresay you don't know that there is a fashion now for ladies to have all sorts of things done to their hands to make them white and smooth and pretty, so as to look as if they never did anything; but when the time comes for hands to be folded quite still at the last, I think the

brown hands with the look of hard work about them will be more beautiful in our Master's sight, if we have so lived that He may say, *Well done, good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord.*

# THOUGHTS AND WORDS—

## WHITSUNTIDE

*The Lord shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things: who have said, With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own: who is lord over us?*

PSALM xii. 3, 4.

*Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer.* PSALM xix. 14.

*Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.* MATTHEW xii. 34-37.

## THOUGHTS AND WORDS—

### WHITSUNTIDE

I HOPE that none of us have passed through Whitsuntide, the time when the Church of God, not just the Church of England but the whole company of the faithful all the world over, bear in mind the great gift which our Master promised and gave—the gift of His Holy Spirit—I hope none of us have passed through these days without some desire and prayer that this gift may indeed be ours, and that we may live each year of our lives more and more as those in whom the spirit of Jesus dwells.

And to-day I have thought we would consider a little the help we all need from Him to make our words what they should be—the "gift of tongues" in our daily life.

We all know what St James says about the tongue. He says it is like a raging wild beast whom no man can tame, and like a fire, yes, a terrible fire, lit in hell.

But I am not going to speak to-day of this wild beast of passion, this great flame of angry words, from which indeed I pray that we may all be delivered.

But of this. Are we careful that our words should be always *with grace* as St Paul says, gracious, gentle, wise and brave words, words that shall make those we talk with happier and more hopeful, friendly words that shall make them sure of our sympathy, and that shall make them think more kindly of others and more brightly of life; or do we often grumble a little, often speak a little bit unkindly of others, or a little fretfully about our own affairs, or our own worries or weariness or illness or disappointment, or at least do we talk all day about this and that, without one word that is any good to anyone else? Well, if it is so, it is because the meditations of our heart are not acceptable in God's sight; because we have not the *good treasure* in our hearts of which our dear Master speaks; and what a terrible thought it is if we have an *evil treasure*, a treasure of unthankful and fretful, or just of foolish and selfish thoughts in which

we see no harm, but which we know cannot be acceptable in His sight.

A verse that I am fond of says :—

"Guard well thy thoughts, for thoughts are heard in Heaven."

Let us pray Him then to give us by His Holy Spirit such thoughts as He loves, so that when we are alone or silent, we may be full of what is gracious and sweet, of thankfulness for all our blessings, for health, for those we love, for sunshine, for rain, for the knowledge that even trouble and pain are sent us by a loving Hand, thoughts of the kindness of others, pity and sorrow for them if they are in distress, thoughts of how we may help them.

A woman who has this *good treasure* always in her heart will speak words that are acceptable in God's sight; and this gift of tongues given by the Holy Spirit will be also even a gift of Healing, for all who talk with such a woman will find healing for the body and hope for the soul in her gentle and gracious words.

May it be so with each of us.

# UPLIFTING

## IN DARK AND RAINY WEATHER AFTER DROUGHT

*The Lord bringeth low and lifteth up.*

1 Samuel ii. 7.

*The Lord lifteth up the meek.*

Psalm cxlvii. 6.

*I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.*

John xii. 32.

*Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.* James iv. 10.

# UPLIFTING

## IN DARK AND RAINY WEATHER AFTER DROUGHT

IN these gloomy days when the clouds seem settled down upon the earth, though we are so thankful for the rain which fills the ponds, and fills our water-tubs, and in time, I hope, will fill the wells when it has made a great store of water in the heart of the hills—in these gloomy days one longs to be *lifted up*, up above the clouds, to where we know the sun is shining, up above our cares which weigh heavily in these tiring days, up above the muddy ways in which we walk so wearily. To be *lifted up*, it is what we always want, only we do not always know it, we do not always ask for it.

But if we do ask for it, if we ask in earnest before we begin our day's work, that we may be *lifted up*, that we may go through our work not dragging through

it, but carried over it, how different the days are! Don't you know it?

Haven't you tried it and found it so sometimes? That instead of everything seeming contrary and worrying and depressing, the work is well done and quickly done, the children are good, the little troubles that arise seem only occasions for meeting them bravely, and when evening comes we do not feel that we have been plodding through the mud, or struggling through brambles; we feel that we have been walking on the hills with God in His sunshine, and when we ask ourselves *why* all this has been, we remember our morning prayer, and we know that He heard it.

There may not be always quite this simple answer to our prayers. He may see that we need a day of discipline; and then we must remember what the *lifting up* of which He spoke meant, when He said, *I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me.* For Him it meant the Cross, not ease, and to each one of us, all uplifting must mean the cross too. It is the meek that He will lift up, those that humble

themselves, those that have taken their cross and desire to follow Him; and if He sees that we are not even desiring to take the cross, if He sees that we just want to please ourselves, He may teach us our lesson in another way, we may have to be humbled first.

*The Lord bringeth low and lifteth up*, as Hannah said. I daresay she was a much better and tenderer mother to her boy because of all she had suffered, all that hard time of bringing low before she was lifted up. You remember the story?

So we are sometimes led through troubles and contradictions and unkindnesses which have brought us low, which have taught us to think less of ourselves and more gently of others and more continually of our Master, out on to that quiet height of peace, from which He will call us one day with the gentle "Friend, come up higher," into the Everlasting Joy.

PACIFIC
LIBRARY

# THE SORROW OF GOD

*Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.* PSALM ciii. 13, 14.

*He was their Saviour. In all their affliction he was afflicted and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them: and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.* ISAIAH lxiii. 9.

*Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?*

JOHN xiv. 8, 9.

## THE SORROW OF GOD

"HE that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

Do we ever think of the meaning of those wonderful words? What did the disciples see as they walked about with Jesus? A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, a man like themselves, only often, we must think, more weary because He spent nights in prayer when they were sleeping; a man who was fond of little children, a man full of tenderness to all who were sick, or sad, tender even to sinners if they saw themselves sinful, in tears by a grave side, in agony in the garden, tortured on the Cross. But do we think of the Father so? Do we think of Him as all through the ages, sorrowing, striving, loving and seeking us—suffering in our sorrow and our sin?

Do we perhaps at most think of this sorrowing love as a change that came when the Father sent the Son into the

world with a message of peace, as a new thing?

But what did the prophet Isaiah write long before Christ came? He told of God in agony over the sins of His people like the pain of a woman in childbirth—how *in all their affliction He was afflicted*, and how *surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows*.

And David told of the Father's pity, *Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him.* There can be no true pity for suffering without sharing the sorrow and the pain.

Yes, it is indeed too wonderful for us to believe that "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father," that the Almighty and all Holy One, the Maker of heaven and earth, does in some mysterious way suffer in our suffering, pities not only our pains, but our follies in His great gentleness. *Thou knowest my foolishness*, said Asaph the Psalmist; even our foolishness He knows, He is tender to; because He knows our frame; and remembers that we, whom He made, are dust, dust of the earth, not yet set free.

We fear Him so much that we never even guess how much He loves us. But if we do not think of Him as striving, yearning, suffering for us, we dishonour Him, because we think of Him as less loving than the best men and women whom He has made. He is our Judge—Christ, who is one with Him, is our Judge, Christ is our Redeemer—God, who is one with Christ, is our Redeemer too. *He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.*

Shall we not then draw near to Him in every trouble? Draw near? We are never far except when we sin. Then we walk away from Him so far it seems to us. So far? yet as soon as we turn our faces towards Him we are close once more to our all loving One.

That there should be sorrow and pain and trouble in His world is a great mystery; yet sometimes He lets us understand that *whom He loves He chastens*, and then we can believe that in the darkest hour we are but under the shadow of His hand, the hand still of love, love greater than we can dream.

# "LAVENDER AND LILIES"

*Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, even as Christ also loved us, and gave himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odour of a sweet smell. But all uncleanness let it not even be named among you as becometh saints, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not befitting, but rather giving of thanks. And be not drunken with wine wherein is riot, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord.*

EPHESIANS v. (A.V. and R.V.).

## "LAVENDER AND LILIES"

ST PAUL, in the words I have read, was telling his friends in Ephesus, and so we may feel that he is telling us, that our love to others should be what Christ's love was, and is, to us; that as he gave Himself, a perfect sacrifice to God, offering up the human nature which He took upon Him, perfected, to God for us, so we should offer up our lives to God and for others as a sweet-smelling sacrifice. The sacrifices of the Old Testament were offered as a type, a sort of picture, of the death of Christ.

We have no time now to speak of those ancient sacrifices, but let us try to see a little what St Paul meant by those words, what sort of sweet-smelling sacrifice we are to offer for others as Christ gave Himself for us.

He begins by saying that our lives, our thoughts, our words, must be clean, pure lives, and thoughts, and words. This we

should all think of at once, should we not? Whatever is impure, unclean, cannot be sweet smelling, so we must not only in our lives but in our thoughts and words, be pure. We must not speak, or even think when we are alone, or read, of what is *not befitting*.

We must not be foolish, he says, we must not be fond of strong drink which would make us disorderly, but much more, we must not only turn away from what is evil, but we must be ready to speak to one another of our joy in God's love for us; and in our hearts when we are alone, at our work, or in our rest, or when we wake in the night, we should be making melody, singing in our hearts to the Lord: that is having sweet thoughts of our Lord and his kindness to us.

What a lovely sort of a woman that must be, a woman singing in her heart to the Lord!

I will read you a verse that I am fond of — that is the thought of such a woman:—

> "How infinite and sweet, Thou everywhere
> And all abounding Love, Thy service is!

Thou liest an ocean round my world of care,
My petty every-day, and fresh and fair
Pour Thy strong tides through all my crevices,
Until the silence ripples into prayer.

"The busy fingers fly, the eye may see
Only the glancing needle which they hold,
But all my life is blossoming inwardly,
And every breath is like a litany,
While through each labor, like a thread of gold
Is woven the sweet consciousness of Thee."[1]

That is the sort of life that is fragrant, sweet smelling, and in its lowly fashion a little like Christ; and even those who have to do with such an one carry away some of her sweetness and even bear it to others.

All these thoughts have come to me because just now in our orchard a great deal of lavender is being gathered, and some women and children from the village are at work there. And when the children go home, their mothers say how sweetly they smell of the lavender; and when the women go to work in other houses, people tell them that they bring the pleasant scent with them; and

[1] From "The Day's Message" (Roberts Brothers, Boston), by kind permission of "Susan Coolidge."

all along the path through the coppice by which they come and go, one can smell it too, so fragrant and fresh and pure.

Shall we ask ourselves whether it is so with us, with our lives? If we have been with Jesus, if we are the sort of people who sing in their hearts to the Lord when they are alone, we shall have this fragrance. We shall make the world all about us sweeter for our presence. It will need no words. The very being near us will be a joy and a help to others; and even those about us will carry away, wherever they go, the sweetness they have caught from us.

One other thing brought these thoughts to my mind. We have had a great and beautiful lily in our house lately which has a heavy, sickly scent that made us all feel ill, and we had to put it out in the garden, though at first its beauty and sweetness made us pleased to have it near us. This is like another sort of character. Don't you know how it is with some people who rather take our fancy at first, people who are amusing, talking a good deal of gossip about their neighbours,

saying things that we ought to be ashamed to hear, and flattering our own vanity? But I hope you do not know it. I hope that none of us here has such an acquaintance; but such people are like the great sickly-scented lily, I think, not like the fresh lavender, and we should keep them out of our houses, out of our thoughts and company.

Let us pray that our whole lives may be an offering of a sweet savour to Him who loves us—that we may go through life as His sweet lavender.

# THE PRESENCE OF GOD

*Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in unto him, and sup with him, and he with me.*

REVELATION iii. 20.

## THE PRESENCE OF GOD

DO we ever take Him at His word? It is as true now as when He said these words to St John in the Revelation, as true as when He said to His disciples: *If a man love Me, he will keep My words, and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him and make Our abode with him.*

But do we believe it? Do we believe that He really will come in at the door of our lives? Have we tried? He stands there. Do we listen for His knock? Do we hear it? Ah! the great question is, have we ever opened the door? If we have, we *know*. He has come in, and we have supped with Him. And others must know too. Those who know us must see shining in our faces, they must hear in our voices, they must know by our lives, WHO has come in at our door. Is it so?

You know I like to share with you the good things that come to me; and I have had a little book given to me about which

I should like to tell you. It is a very simple story of a poor lame man who lived more than 200 years ago. He was brought to think of God first by the sight of a wintry tree, and the thought that God would bring the leaves and the fruit to that tree as the seasons came round. He loved God from that moment because he felt Him near in the wonder of His work in Nature. That is one of the ways in which people may open the door to Him.

This poor lame man was a monk in a monastery. People talk and write about monks and nuns as idle and often wicked people; I suppose there are idle and wicked people everywhere. But it is also true that in convents and monasteries there have been, and I hope still are, many men and women who have given up their whole lives to God's service, denied themselves for His sake all the pleasures of the world. This poor man's work was in the kitchen of the monastery. He did not like cooking, but that did not matter to him because he had found out that great secret of opening the door for Jesus to come in,

and he lived always in the Presence of God.

This made him so happy that people used to ask him how it was; and he told them that it was just this, that he lived with God.

I will read to you from my little book.

[1] *Brother Laurence said that his prayer was nothing else but a sense of the Presence of God, his soul being at that time insensible to everything but divine love, and that when the appointed times of prayer were past, he found no difference because he still continued with God, praising Him and blessing Him with all his might, so that he passed his life in continued joy.*

*That when he had thus in prayer filled his mind with great thoughts of God, he went to his work appointed in the kitchen. There, having first considered the things that his office required, and when and how each thing was to be done, he spent all the intervals of his time, as well before as after his work, in prayer, and it was observed that in the greatest hurry of business in the kitchen he still preserved his*

[1] From "The Practice of the Presence of God." By kind permission of Messrs James Nisbet & Co.

*recollection* (recollection here means the gathering together of one's thoughts for a holy purpose) *and heavenly mindedness. He was never hasty nor loitering but did each thing in its season, with an even, uninterrupted composure and tranquillity of spirit. "The time of business," said he, "does not with me differ from the time of prayer, and in the noise and clatter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great tranquillity as if I were upon my knees at the blessed Sacrament."*

I think this is very teaching for us, because it shows how his goodness shone in his whole life, and that instead of his religion making him forgetful of his daily work, he did everything better because he felt that his Master was there, "Jesus his Master."

And one word more. If we wish to let Jesus in, to live in His presence, we shall put away out of our lives everything that He could not dwell with there, everything untrue, everything impure, everything selfish, or unloving. Let us think of this every day, and sweep the house clean, the house of our hearts and

lives, and sit down to listen for His knock.

The more busy we are, the more need there is for this *Practice of the Presence of God.* Shall we try it?

# ORCHARDS

*The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.*

PROVERBS xi. 30.

*Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.*

JOHN xv. 8.

*Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.*

HEBREWS xii. 11.

## ORCHARDS

I THINK, in these autumn days when the trees are bending down with their fruit, or when we are gathering it, I hope with thankful hearts, we should not be content just to think "this is a good apple crop, or plum crop, or cherry crop, or a bad one," as the case may be; but we should think of the beauty and wonder of the world that our Father has made, and take all His gifts as from a Hand, His hand, and not as if we took it from a shelf.

Just think how full of wonder and joy the world would be, and of meaning, if we thought of it so, if, when we took a red apple from the tree, or picked it up fallen in the grass, we thought, "God who made all things gives me this, I take it from His hand." And just think how wonderful it is! how dead and bare the trees were in winter, and then out of the dry branches came blossoms, and leaves, and fruit, each one after its kind. Each tiny

seed or graft contains just God's own purpose for that tree, and it makes no mistake; what He has folded up in it unfolds, we cannot tell why or how. Do you think of this?

And have you ever thought, in sadness, that it would be almost better if we could be like the trees, each one bearing the very fruit He meant us to bear—even if it were only like the beautiful scarlet hips, or the little haws, or holly berries to feed His birds, if we knew that we could not go wrong, but should bear the fruit He expected of us. I have known that feeling, and almost envied a little leaf in the grass, that had no choice but just to grow in God's way.

But it is because He loves us more than His trees, though I think He loves them too, that He has given us wills, to choose whether we will do His bidding or leave it undone; and that we have each to learn what fruit He expects of us, and to bear that fruit.

And because we cannot do this of ourselves, He tells us that He has made Himself like us, so that we need not try

to bear fruit without His help, we are not separate trees in His garden, but just branches of Him, and He is the tree on which we grow. This is a wonderful thought; we could not have dared to hope it, if He had not told us that we are to be one with Him, His life our life, we, each one of us, a part of His infinite life; just think what it means, if we are but willing that this beautiful thing should be. But if we bear no fruit, it shows that we are not drawing our life from Him; and God, the Husbandman, will come and find us so, and we shall be cut off and thrown away —burned as useless, fruitless. But let us not dwell on this terrible thought, for if we desire, ever so faintly, to be one with Him, the Master of the Vineyard sees the smallest sign of life in our souls, and He waits, oh, how patiently, for our fruit.

There are many thoughts that come with the fruit time. The branches that bear much fruit, how they are bent down by it, as people may be wearied with the work they have to do for God (all our work may be, should be, done for God), but how beautiful the trees are that have

been so loaded! A little apple-tree when it is first planted is not very pretty, but when, year after year, the branches have been bent down with the apples, how beautiful it is, the most beautiful I think of all trees, though people don't always take time to stop and look at it; and so how beautiful are the souls, and even the faces, of those who have borne the peaceable fruit of righteousness, fruit unto life eternal, even if they have been wearied, or even because they have been wearied.

We cannot all bear the same fruit; but do we remember that every year He comes seeking fruit? He seeks from all of us humble and honest and pure and faithful lives. He seeks, I think, from all, that we should win other souls to Him, the souls of our husbands, our children, our neighbours. He seeks even that our common daily work should be done very well, as if He saw it—for He does.

Do we think that all about this very place in which we live He is coming—He, His very self—day by day and year by year, seeking fruit? Ah! if He

would but open our eyes we should see Him close to us; and what should we say or do? Should we just look up into a Face we have always loved, and say, "Dear Master, I have tried to serve Thee; Thou knowest all"; or should we be filled with fear and try to hide, like Adam among the trees of the garden?

God grant it be not so with any one of us. Amen.

# SAVOURLESS SALT

*Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

MATTHEW v. 13, 20.

## SAVOURLESS SALT

WHO does our Master speak of as the *salt of the earth?* His disciples. And what does He mean by the salt? I think He means that which purifies and keeps pure whatever it touches. This is what His disciples do. They cannot help it if they are true disciples. They will be so filled with His Spirit, that they are not only pure, free from willing sin themselves, but they keep their bit of the world, those about them, also from sin. We all know people, I hope, in whose presence evil or coarse or unkind words would not be spoken. The salt purifies.

So then to have in any way become disciples of Jesus Christ is a very great responsibility, because it means that we ought to be the Salt of the Earth.

Jesus tells us, further on, what the salt of the earth should do, and should not do. They must not think that any belief in Him will save them from the

need of keeping His Commandments, from the need of goodness, of honesty, of purity, of not coveting—because it is quite the other way. Every step in our spiritual life, every kind of uplifting we may get from reading our Bibles, or hearing sermons, or thinking in secret of our God, means a much greater need of watchfulness over every action and word and thought.

*Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* Yet the Scribes and Pharisees kept the law, and in their own way were very righteous.

If the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall *it* be salted? If those who call on the name of Christ think that they can be religious without being good, how shall they be saved?

The savourless salt is only fit to be cast out and trodden under foot of men; not cast out from the presence of God alone, but trodden under foot of *men.* Men, even those who are not themselves good, *all men* despise those who are like salt without savour, who profess religion, but

are not keeping the Commandments. What a contrast, a shining light upon a hill, and a trampled heap, not even fit for a dung-hill! It is a very terrible thought; and I pray that none of us may be so self-deceived—that we may search our hearts very diligently to find wherein we are disobeying the least of the Commandments of God. We may think that none of the Commandments can be called small, or "the least"; but I think what our Master meant was "whoever should break in the least degree." So that though none of us might be tempted to kill, we may have cruel thoughts; if we are never tempted actually to steal, we may be tempted to some kind of untruthfulness, or dealing in some way as we should not deal if it were known to others. And so, though we may not be tempted to the great sin of the Seventh Commandment, we may allow ourselves to listen to things that are not pure, or to read accounts in the papers of impure doings, and so the salt may lose its savour.

*Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven,*

*but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in Heaven.* And to do the Will we need His help day by day, yes, hour by hour, with a continual lifting up of our hearts when temptations assail us.

God grant that none of us be as salt that has lost its savour, but that the world about us may be made sweeter, purer, happier for the life of each one here.

# THE LOOKING-GLASS OF LIBERTY

*If the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: how shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: and not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: but their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed*

*into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* 2 Cor. iii. 7-18.

*But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.* James i. 22-27.

## THE LOOKING-GLASS OF LIBERTY

BOTH of these passages seem at first rather hard to understand. Their meaning is on the whole the same. St Paul tells the Christians in Corinth, to whom he is writing, that when the Law —that is the Ten Commandments and all the rules about ceremonies and sacrifices and purifications—was read to the children of Israel by Moses, Moses put a veil upon his face. He had been talking with God, and his face shone with the glory of that Other that had shone upon it; and when he first came to read the Law the people could not have borne to look upon anything so bright. But by degrees that light faded from his face; and then he again hid it with a veil that they might not see that it was fading.

It was hard for the children of Israel to keep the Law, because they did not even see the reflected glory of God in

the face of Moses. They tried to keep the Law without knowing what it was to have the mind of the Spirit; so that they were like St Paul himself when he said, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?" because the good that he *would*, he could not do, and the evil that he would *not*, he did. This is what he calls a "Ministration of Death." It is just the same thing with us. Unless we see something of the glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ. But he says, whenever we turn to the Lord, the veil is taken away—the veil that hid the glory from the children of Israel. The Law they could not keep made them feel like slaves, slaves to the Law, or slaves of sin, if they could not keep it; but now the veil is taken away if we will but believe it. We have but to look, as in a mirror, upon that Face, to remember That Face, and we go out into the world free. Free to do whatever we will. *Whatever we will?* Yes. Because, if we remember That Face, we shall will nothing but His Will, and shall go on being changed into the Likeness of Christ—"from Glory to Glory."

What St James says means nearly the same thing. What he says is this: If we like to hear and talk about good things, and we don't do what is right, we are like people who look at their own faces in a glass. Indeed that is just what we are doing, we are looking at ourselves. There is no help in that looking-glass—it too is a "Ministration of Death." But if we look in that other looking-glass—the glass of the Law of Liberty, which is indeed the Spirit of the Lord, the Mirror that reflects the Glory—then we are blessed in all we do. Yes, *in all we do*, for we do not go away and forget That Face, the Face reflected there.

And then he reminds us again that if we think we are religious, and are not good, our religion is worth nothing at all; we had better be good and have no religion than seem to be religious and not be good.

There is another thought. The veil hid the fading of the glory. It hid from the Jews the fading glory of the old Covenant: so that to this day they worship what has passed away. A veil may hide

from us too the fading glory of all that s merely temporary or passing in any system of religion, in any mere ceremonies and services. But the veil is taken away n Christ, because where the Spirit of the Lord is there is Liberty—no bondage o any outward form, but the Image which needs no veil, because its only change s from Glory to Glory.

And what we have to remember is ust this. That the only way to please God is to be good, and the only way o be good is to look, not into the glass where we see ourselves, but into the lass where we see the face of Jesus Christ, to go on looking and looking and ooking, till we grow every day more ke Him.

It is just Love, Love that will change ur poor sad sinful likeness—from Glory Glory.

# STONES MADE BREAD

*And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.*

LUKE xi. 2-4.

## STONES MADE BREAD

I READ this morning a verse which helped me; and I like to bring to you whatever is sent to me in books, or in life, or anywhere, that does this, for we must believe that all such helping comes straight from the Father of our spirits.

I will not read the verse till I come to the end of what I have to say, because it wants a little explaining first.

The meaning of it is this, that when we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," we ask, or ought to ask, not only for food for our bodies, but for food for our souls, our real selves, which may be living already, by God's grace, the Life Eternal, and which will live for ever.

You remember how Jesus blamed His disciples when they thought He was speaking about the bread they had forgotten to take with them in the boat; and He was really warning them against the leaven, that is the evil mind, that

works like leaven, of the Scribes and Pharisees. He was often grieved with them because they only saw the outside meaning of things; they did not take the trouble to think of the inside meaning.

You will remember, too, that after He had been talking to the woman of Samaria, they begged Him to eat, and He said, "*I have meat to eat that ye know not of*"; and there again they did not understand, and said, "*Hath any man brought Him ought to eat?*" They might have understood, I think, if they had looked in His face and seen how it was lit up by the joy of doing the will of Him that sent Him, all thought of hunger and of the needs of the body—though we know He was weary and had been thirsty—all such thoughts lost in the great gladness of calling those poor wandering sheep into the fold.

Well, I want that we should not be of those to whom he says, "Do ye not yet understand?" Not *yet*, after all these hundreds of years in which people have been teaching and preaching the gospel of the Kingdom; not *yet*, after you have been called each one of you by name? So

let us think what the daily bread, for which he teaches us to pray, may mean for our souls, our real selves.

May it not mean just such work, such cares, such pains and troubles and disappointments if need be, or just such joy and love and rest as we need to strengthen us for the pilgrim way, the path on which we are to walk towards the Kingdom?

We say "towards the Kingdom," but He has said, "The Kingdom of God is within you." You remember that one who heard Him speak said, *Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God.* Then let us think how beautiful our lives may be if whatever He gives us to do or to bear each day is the daily bread which we are eating already in the Kingdom of God, in that secret place within where we dwell with Him.

"What?" we may think, "the hard work, the cross word, I have to bear, the troubles of every day, are these the bread of God? *If we ask bread will He give us a stone?*" Will He? Will He not rather do for us what He would not do for Himself at the voice of the Tempter, and command

that these stones be made bread: these hard things in our life, the very food of our souls.

Do you believe this? Have you tried it? I know that it is true.

Now I will read you the verse[1] of which I spoke at the beginning; and if I read it slowly, I do not think you will find it hard to understand:—

> "The sting for pride, the smart for sin,
> The purging draught for self within,
> The sorrows which we shuddering meet,
> Not knowing their after-taste of sweet:
> All these we ask for when we pray
> "Give us our daily bread this day."
> Lord, leave us not athirst, unfed,
> Give us this best and hardest bread,
> Until, these mortal needs all past,
> We sit at Thy full feast at last,
> The Bread of Angels broken by Thee,
> The wine of joy poured constantly."

Lord, evermore give us this bread.

[1] From "The Day's Message" (Roberts Brothers, Boston), by kind permission of "Susan Coolidge."

# THE ELEVENTH HOUR

*For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the market-place. And said unto them ; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle. They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard ; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive. So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more ; and they likewise received every man a penny. And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house, say-*

*ing, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? So the last shall be first, and first last: for many be called, but few chosen.*

MATTHEW XX. 1-16.

## THE ELEVENTH HOUR

I THINK this parable is one from which people take comfort which our Master never meant them to take. "The eleventh hour," "saved at the eleventh hour," has become a common saying; and it is indeed a blessed thought that it is never too late to turn to the Lord, that however late in our earthly life we hear His voice and do the work He tells us to do, He will give us His penny. I think we may see in this penny, which was the same to all, that the gift of God cannot be made more or less; it is indeed too great to measure, and he who answers the Master's call will receive what He sees fit, sufficient for all his need —His penny.

There is a lovely story in an old book that I am very fond of, a story of a man killed in battle,[1] a violent, fierce man, but as he lay dying he shed a tear for his sins; and so when an evil angel came to take

[1] Buonconte di Montefeltro, *Purgatorio*, v.

his soul away to the terrible place that he seemed to have deserved, a good angel was sent by God to save him, and the evil angel complained that he had lost the soul "for the sake of one little tear." And so we believe that it may be, for we think too of the dying thief, who turned to Jesus in his death agony, and we are ready—only too ready—to remember these things, and to forget what our Master really meant by the parable we have been reading.

"*Why stand ye here all the day idle?*" This is what the master of the vineyard said. He had found others standing idle at nine o'clock and at noon, and early in the afternoon, and he said to them at once, "*Go and work in my vineyard.*" He did not say, "Idle about here as long as you like and come at the eleventh hour, and you shall have the same wages as those who have worked through all the long hot day." He was willing indeed when he came out an hour before sunset and found some men standing idle in the market-place to take their excuse for not having worked before. "No man hath hired us." We can fancy

how gladly these poor men would go and do their one hour's work; and we can easily fancy too how those who had worked through all the heat of noon might grumble, though this was foolish of them, for they were happier working than idling.

But can we say that no man has hired us? that we have not been called to serve in God's vineyard? Perhaps we say that we do not know where the vineyard is, or what work to do.

People often speak of working in God's vineyard as if it meant only preaching or teaching or becoming a missionary; and we are all called in one way or another, by our lips or our lives, to lead others to God; but there is a little vineyard of the Lord close by the door of each of us, and work there to do.

I once sat sketching for many hours of many days among some vines in Italy. Italy is a country, you know, where there are a great many vineyards, and where they make wine from the grapes. Whilst I sat there, a man, what the Bible would call a husbandman, came and went among the vines, and I used to see him pass by me

with great armfuls of green branches that had only just grown. He took them off the vines because there would be no fruit if these great beautiful branches were allowed to grow.

And I have read out of an old gardener's book that all the year through the vine has to be pruned and to have something taken away that would prevent its being fruitful. Sometimes it is cut off, sometimes it is rubbed off. Do you see? We have sometimes to cut out sharply from our lives some sin that we know would prevent our bearing fruit, or just to rub away, day by day, the hasty temper, or the gossiping, or the idleness, or whatever it is, that we know the Master of the vineyard, the Master of our souls, would not like to see there.

And then for our comfort we may remember two things. One, that the vine we have to care for is not planted just in our own little plot; but it is, if we are "in Christ," a branch of the True Vine that comes over the wall of separation between the things seen and unseen, and our lives are a part of His life. Another, that if we

have let the early morning hour go by, we can come at the third or the sixth or the ninth, or even at the eleventh; but remember, *when we are called we must come*, and at the eleventh hour there was still an hour's work to be done, it was not the twelfth, not nightfall, not waiting till we are dying, till we are in pain, or half unconscious, or drowsy—or distracted with sickness, and then saying a few words about the Saviour. Souls may be saved "by one little tear," but who that loves his Master would wish to die so?

The great lesson is to listen for His call, and to be content with His penny. Who would not be content if they knew that what He gives is indeed His Spirit—Himself?

# "SIN UNTO DEATH"
# "SIN NOT UNTO DEATH"

*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*

1 John i. 8.

*Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.* 1 John iii. 6.

*We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.*

1 John iii. 14.

*If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.* 1 John v. 16, 17.

## "SIN UNTO DEATH"
## "SIN NOT UNTO DEATH"

THESE words in St John's Epistle almost seem to contradict one another, because in the first we are told that we all sin; that if we say we have no sin we lie, but that if we confess the sins that we all commit, God will forgive us and cleanse us. All this is simple, it is exactly what we all know so well; we know that not one of us can say truly that we have not sinned, that every day we have something to repent of, some hasty word, or angry thought, some kindness left undone, something for which we need forgiveness.

And we can even say that times of sorrow for sin, times when tears of repentance come to our eyes, are some of our best things: because the confession of sin, and the peace which comes from knowing our sins forgiven, are the things that bring us nearest to God.

But then there come these terrible words, *Whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him*, and again, *Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin*; and if we had these words only we might quite despair, each one might say, "I cannot be born of God, if this be so, I cannot have seen Him, I cannot have known Him," and yet, "yet," might not each one say, "I think I have sometimes seen Him, He is not a stranger to me altogether, it cannot be all a mistake?"

And I think we may find help in some of the words that come after in the same epistle, help to understand St John's meaning. Here is one, *He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.* This unloving is a sin that does indeed separate us from our Lord; we know it and feel it, we know that we are walking in darkness, if we have hatred in our hearts, walking in that darkness, where we see Him not.

And then in those other verses, v. 16, 17, I think we see a little what St John meant by the words, *There is a sin not unto death.* The sins we do not for one moment consent to, the sins against which

we are always striving, these are, I think, the sins not unto death. God sees our hearts, He sees our sorrow, He is always ready to forgive and to heal us. But it is when we are consenting to sin, when day by day we are doing what we know to be wrong, not steadfastly turning away from the darkness and towards the light, when any unloving, or untrue, or dishonest or impure thing is a part of our life, and unrepented of, then indeed we are not *in Christ*, we are sinning *unto death*. It is a very awful thought that this can be so with anyone. It is never too late to turn away from our sin, to confess and be forgiven, but we must never think that we may go on sinning, meaning to repent and be forgiven some day. The sin we live with willingly, the wrong to our neighbour we have not confessed, the wrong in our own lives we do not care to own, the secret faults, these are sins unto death. St John says, *I do not say that he shall pray for that*, because no prayer can save another soul if that soul does not desire to cease from sin.

But we may pray, and we must pray

for those whom we know to be sinning, that God, by His Holy Spirit, will show them their sinfulness, will bring them to repentance, will raise them up from this death.

We could not bear to think, and we are sure it cannot be, that it is ever in vain to pray to God for sinners, ever too late to pray that, if need be, by the fire of His judgments, He will save even the worst.

# THE HEALING SPRING

*After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took np his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath. The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy*

*bed. He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk. Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk? And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place. Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole. And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day. But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.* JOHN V. 1-18.

*For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is*

*dressed, receiveth Blessing from God: but that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned. But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you.* HEBREW vi. 4-9.

# THE HEALING SPRING

YOU will remember how many beautiful stories there are in the gospels of people who asked Jesus to heal them, and who were saved, healed, forgiven, because of their faith—because they believed that Jesus was able to do this for them.

But now we have read of a man who did not ask to be cured of his sickness, who was really without hope, because he had no human helper or friend. He was a man whose disease was brought on by sin, and who must—one thinks—have been of an unlovable character, since he had found no one through all those long years who was willing to come and help him down into the pool.

This pool was like many of the places to which people now go, to bathe in medicinal springs; and in these springs there often bubbles up what is called a "gas," which has some healing power in

it. The poor people who waited round the pool of Bethesda thought that whoever went into the water first after the bubbles rose was the one who would be healed. The verse about an angel going down into the water is not really in the gospel, it was put in by some one who was copying the book at a later time. You will see that it is left out in the Revised Version. Not that this matters much in any way, because we believe that all healing springs and all medicines and cures are really God's messengers. The word "angel" only means "messenger," the bringer of God's messages to us.

Jesus went to the place where this crowd of miserable people were waiting—each one only with this selfish thought in his heart, "Can I be healed instead of some one else?" and He saw this one poor man—a bad man, an unlovable man—and He asked him if he wanted to be made well. The poor man told the story of his thirty-eight years of suffering, and of his having no friend. "*Sir, I have no man*"—*No man?* when *Jesus* stood by! How many of us may be as foolish and blind as he.

Perhaps he thought that Jesus, who ooked so kind, would help him down into he water. How surprised he must have een when He only told him to do what e had not been able to do all those long ears—to rise and roll up the mat on which he lay there and walk away. But e did it—he found that strength was uddenly given him—and when he looked ound Jesus was gone. He must have elt sure that his healing was the work f God, for he went to the temple o give thanks. There Jesus met him, nd he knew Who it was that had healed im. The words that Jesus said to him, *Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon thee,*" ake us think of those terrible words in e Epistle to the Hebrews about those ho have tasted God's goodness to their uls and then fall away; they are said to e like ground refreshed by rain which en brings forth only weeds. Let us ink of this sometimes when we walk in ir gardens after a beautiful rain, and say, Have I received God's grace? have I en forgiven and healed of my sins—my thered soul refreshed—and then have I

gone back to the old life—the old forgetfulness of God; are there weeds again—only weeds in my soul's garden, though I have *known* Who it was that healed me?"

God grant that it may not be so with any of us.

But we have also read to-day of people quite different from this poor man whom Jesus healed, people who did not think they had any need of healing for body or soul, religious people who were not good people, but who did not feel themselves wicked at all. I am not sure that we always quite understand the danger of being like those who *sought the more* to kill Jesus because of what He said and did. They perhaps thought that in blaming Him for healing on the Sabbath day, and even in wishing to kill Him, they were doing God service.

People have often thought so since then, when they have imprisoned, or punished with a hundred cruel tortures, or even burnt alive, those who worshipped God in a way that was not their way. Then, if these people were religious, and if they

hought that they were doing right, where
was the fault? Where was the sin of the
ews who wanted to kill Jesus?

I think it was that they would not try
o understand the will of God. They
vere stupid, and so they were wicked—
hey were wilfully stupid—and they did
ot bring wise and simple minds to what
hey saw and heard. Wise and simple—
hat is what they should have been.

They saw this poor man cured of his
ng sickness; but instead of thinking
only one who is good and holy would
could do such a deed of healing," they
gan to find fault with the poor man for
rrying his mat on the Sabbath day; then
ith Jesus for healing him, and then again
ith Jesus because He said that God was
is Father. If they had had wise and
mple hearts they would have been glad
at such a sufferer should be cured, and
ould not have been looking out for
mething to blame; and when he told
em that he was carrying his mat because
Healer told him to do so, they would
ve thought that surely One who could
ve strength to the weak might know

something even about what it was right to do on the Sabbath day.

You see they did not love God *with all their understanding*; they did not, or would not, see that all goodness is of God.

So from this story of the Spring of Bethesda we learn three lessons. One, that our Lord is seeking to heal and forgive even the poor sick souls and bodies that have no hope of love and help from God or man.

Then the very solemn lesson that, if we have been healed and forgiven, and go back again to our sin, a worse thing comes to us, a heart that may not be ready again to repent—a worse thing indeed—the worst.

And last, that we do not really believe in God if we do not believe that all goodness comes from Him; we do not really love Him if we do not love with all our understanding and seek with wise and simple hearts to know His will for ourselves.

# THE SHEEP-FOLD

*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them. Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and*

*fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.*

JOHN X. 1-18.

*How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.*

MATTHEW xviii. 12-14.

## THE SHEEP-FOLD

THE story of the Sheep-fold is really three parables, and one thinks, as one reads it, that Jesus must have been sitting on a hill-side where He could watch a shepherd with His sheep, and so took to Himself first one likeness and then another, always trying to make his hearers think and understand, even sometimes to startle them, because, as I have often told you, He wished people to take pains to understand freshly, each one for himself, what He said to them.

First He told them that He enters in by the door. That is, that He humbled Himself and took our nature upon Him. He came into this world by the same humble door that all his sheep pass through. He took our flesh, and came to be one of us. But that was that He might also set us free from the bondage of the flesh.

*To Him the Porter openeth*—The Porter

was thought by the ancient students of the Gospel to be the Holy Spirit which prepares the hearts of the flock for the freedom of Christ.

And then when the Heavenly Porter opens the door of the heart, the Good Shepherd leads them out calling each by name. He leads them out. He sets them free. Have you thought of that? Of what He will do to each one of us when we hear Him call us? He will lead us out. He will give us freedom, freedom from our sins, from our cares, our sorrows, our fears, most of all from our fear of Death.

Do we know His voice? He calls each one by name, not all the flock at once, but each one. Have you heard Him? And, if so, have you followed Him?

It is good to ask ourselves this. It is good sometimes when we are alone, in prayer, to say our own name softly to ourselves, and to think of Him saying it—calling—calling till we come each one by name.

Then Jesus said "*I am the Door.*" He tells us that if we enter in by Him, we shall be safe, safe in the happy company of His believers, safe, but not shut in.

Oh, He would never have shut us in. The Holy Spirit, the Heavenly Door-keeper would never shut us in—for *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*

"*By me if any man enter in,*" said Christ, the Door, "*he shall go in and out and find pasture,*" food for our souls that we may have life more abundantly.

If we are led out into new thoughts of God, new hopes of what His love is for us, and for all, we need have no fear, since He will not leave us to be devoured, or scattered by the wolves of doubt and despair—by the enemy who goes about like a lion seeking whom he may devour.

Then again Jesus spoke of Himself as the Shepherd. He said twice over that He gives His life for the sheep. We are to have life, so He laid down His earthly life for us—yes—not only for those who listened to Him there, sheep of the Jewish fold, but for us outside that fold. How wonderful it is that as He sat there looking at the Sheep-fold He thought of us too. "*Them also must I bring.*" Ah, if He said He *must* bring us in, and if He calls us by name, can we refuse to listen?

And then there are those wonderful words, "*I know my own and my own know me, even as the Father knoweth me and I the Father.*" How close a knowledge! His own know Him as He knows the Father, heart to heart.

And the Father loved Him because He laid down His life, so He loves us, so He is made glad if we, in any way, in the least denial of self, lay down our own lives, give up our own way, to serve others for His sake.

If we only believed how He has need of us, of our love and of our service, that He does indeed still suffer in all our sin and rejoice in all our loving service, how different we should be. Should we ever grieve Him?

But perhaps we have grieved Him, and our hearts are sore, we have not yet truly repented, and have no power even to repent, we are like sheep wandering on the mountains, we are not sure whether we have ever known the Shepherd's voice, yet we have still a longing not to be altogether lost—what is there left for us? Just this—we have no strength to seek

Him, but He is looking for us. Shall He lose *one* for whom he died? Listen, He calls—look, He comes, and—oh wonderful words! when He finds us *He rejoices*.

I will read you a verse of which I am very fond about the *one* whom He seeks.

"Oh Shepherd with the bleeding Feet,
Good Shepherd with the pleading voice
What seekest Thou from hill to hill?
Sweet were the valley pastures, sweet
The sound of flocks that bleat their joys
And eat and drink at will.
Is one worth seeking, when Thou hast of Thine
Ninety and nine?

"How should I stay my bleeding Feet.
How should I hush my pleading voice?
I who chose death and clomb a hill
Accounting gall and wormwood sweet
That hundredfold might bud my joys
For love's sake and good will.
I seek My one, for all there bide of Mine
Ninety and nine."[1]

So He seeks—shall we not let Him find?

[1] From "Verses." By Christina S. Rossetti. By kind permission of the S.P.C.K.

# MURMURING

*Do all things without murmuring and disputing.*

PHILIPPIANS ii. 14.

*Neither murmur, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.*

I CORINTHIANS X. 10.

*They despised the pleasant land, they believed not his word, but murmured.*

PSALM CVI. 24.

## MURMURING

*DO all things without murmuring and disputing.* Words *come home* to us when we are standing at the door of our hearts to welcome them, when we need them. We may need them as friends to cheer us. There are plenty of such *friend* words in the Bible and not in the Bible only, for helpful comforting words are always passing our way if we stand at the door to watch for them. Sometimes they come like a doctor to bring us medicine, soul medicine; when we are needing it. And so I think I was needing these words the other day, and that made them come home to me. *Do all things without murmurings and disputings.*

Perhaps I had not been disputing much, but I had murmured. If we dress the word "murmur" in every-day clothes and call it "grumble" I think we know it well, only too well. I felt it so when the text came to my door. How apt one

is, without meaning to be unthankful, to grumble a good deal at little things, and at other people's ways, and it is very good for us to remember that this is not only a habit which makes us unpleasant to those around us, an uncomely fashion, but a sin against God.

There are many words in the Bible about murmuring, and if we just use the word "grumbling" we shall see how they come home.

*Do all things without* grumbling. *All things*, our rising up from sleep, our daily work, all that comes in our way.

*Neither* grumble *as some of them also* grumbled, *and were destroyed of the destroyer.* Our happiness, our peace, our very souls are indeed destroyed of the destroyer, destroyed by the Spirit of Evil when we give way to fretfulness.

*They despised the pleasant land, they believed not His word, but*—grumbled. That word about the *Pleasant Land* is so good for us, who live in this beautiful country, we cannot imagine how much harder our lives would be if we lived in smoky, dirty, narrow streets, never breathing really fresh

air at all, or seeing the trees, and green grass, and harvest fields, never hearing the birds sing, and worse still, never being in quiet for the noises of the town. Don't you think, when people call the country "dull" they are *despising the pleasant land?*

Those words were spoken about the children of Israel, as you will remember, and you will remember how often they grumbled and how often they were blamed for it, but sometimes God gently stopped their murmuring by taking away what troubled them as He does with all of us sometimes. I will read you the story of one of these times.

*And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter, therefore the name of it was called Marah. And the people murmured against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?" And he cried unto the Lord, and the Lord showed him a tree, which when he had cast it into the waters, the waters were made sweet. . . .*

*And they came to Elim, where there were twelve wells of water,* one for each tribe,

*and threescore and ten palm trees* to shade them from the heat.

And in the next chapter, when they had murmured again, Moses said to Aaron, "*Say unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, Come near before the Lord, for He hath heard your murmurings. And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud.*" You see God only reproved in a gentle way. He *showed them a tree*, which made the bitter water sweet. Ah, what does that Tree mean to us. What but the Cross of Christ? *The Cross*, which sweetens—it ought to sweeten—all the bitter things at which we grumble, and how? In this way. When we have to suffer through the unkindness of others, through sickness, or poverty, or any other trouble, except sin, we can feel that all suffering, rightly borne, brings us near to Christ, who suffered for us, makes us one with Him. To look at Jesus crucified, to feel His great love for us, will not this, when we are tempted to grumble, make our troubles

not only bearable, but sweet to us, as the bitter water was made sweet to the murmurers in the wilderness?

And then, as if to show them how foolish they had been, He led them *to Elim where there were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees.* What shall we see here for our souls? a well of gladness for every month in the year, a shelter from the weary heat of trouble for every year of our lives, our threescore and ten? A fanciful meaning? yes, perhaps so, but remember in God's purpose for our souls there is nothing "too good to be true."

After that they looked towards the wilderness and saw the glory of God. So may we all by His grace if we cease from our murmurings, look towards the wilderness of this world's care and sorrow and see Him in the cloud. For He is there.

# CHRIST THE CREATOR

## HARVEST TIME

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.*

JOHN i. 1-3.

*Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.* COLOSSIANS i. 12-17.

*God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.*

HEBREWS i. 1, 2.

# CHRIST THE CREATOR

## HARVEST TIME

I HAVE read you some of the passages, (there are many in the Bible) in which Christ is spoken of as the Creator, as with the Father in the Beginning, making the worlds. We do not perhaps often enough think of Him in this way. We think of Him as He was when He took our nature upon Him, when He hungered in the wilderness and thirsted by the well, and these thoughts, all thoughts that make us sure that no need or suffering of ours is not understood by Him now, all such thoughts are very precious, are indeed what our souls live by. We can say "Thou knowest" when we have strength for no other prayer, because He in this wonderful way came and lived our life, that we might look in His face and be sure that He knows all.

But indeed even David long before had seen something of this tenderness in

the face of God the Father, because he said *Thou knowest my foolishness*—a lovely thought—a little prayer we may call it, a laying of our hand in His, and trusting Him with ourselves just as we are.

I remind you of this because, as I often have said to you, we are apt to separate our thoughts of the Father and the Son and not to remember that every act of human tenderness, and even every suffering of Jesus was a part of the showing us the Father. And so we don't always think of the Father as a loving Friend, or of Christ as the Creator, and this was what I was going to talk about to-day.

I was once in a great beautiful church,[1] far away from here, in the island of Sicily, where the walls are covered with pictures that will never fade, though they were put there hundreds of years ago, because they are made of tiny bits of coloured glass, different colours all fitted together so as to make these pictures. There is almost all the Old Testament story told in picture after picture on the walls, so that people who had no Bibles

[1] Monreale.

and could not read could learn them as they went into the great church day by day to say their prayers. In those countries people don't wait for Sunday or for services to go into the churches, but if a woman is going marketing, she will take her big basket and go into the church on the way, and kneel down just in the place she loves best, and pray, not aloud, but silently in her heart, and if a little child is with her, he kneels too, or runs about and plays, nobody would mind that.

At the end of this church, high up near the roof, is a great, very great, picture of the face of our Lord, done in the way I told you about. I always think of that as the face of Christ the Creator. I often remember it.

In these harvest days the wonder of the creating Word seems greater in some ways perhaps even than in spring; we see the miracle that has been wrought for us, that is wrought for us every year, and without which all the human beings on this earth would die—the miracle of the making of the corn—where one grain has been put into the brown earth a great

many are gathered from it, and *how* that is, the secret of the life in each grain of wheat, the wisest men cannot explain, any more than they could the feeding of the multitude when they were out in the wilderness with the five loaves and the two fishes.

It is a miracle—and it is the same Hand that reaches out from His secret place and covers the fields with sheaves and feeds His hungry children. Do we think of this? Do we see Him in the Harvest field? or do we eat our bread forgetting Him? How full our lives would be of beauty and of happiness if we learned to see Him everywhere!

It is not easy always, when perhaps we have not bread enough, or when we hear of storms destroying the crops, or of great famines for want of rain, or when a wet summer brings a poor harvest. These things are hard to understand, and we have just to trust that there is a good purpose in all these troubles, which we shall see when God calls us into His house, and teaches us more than we can learn here.

But when the hills, as David says, *rejoice on every side, and the valleys are covered over with corn*, when *they shout for joy, they also sing*, surely we should go about with a song of praise in our hearts, and feel that the Maker of the world is one who loves us, the Beloved of our souls, a little nearer to us than at other times.

> "O world, as God has made it, all is beauty,
> And knowing this is love, and love is duty,
> What further may be sought for, or declared."[1]

[1] From "The Guardian Angel." By Robert Browning.

# ASSURANCE

*We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.*

1 John iii. 14.

*My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.*

1 John iii. 18-24.

*Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.* 1 John iv. 10.

## ASSURANCE

I THINK we all desire, we all should desire in life—and most people desire when they come to die, an assurance that we dwell in Christ and Christ in us, or as some perhaps would put it, that we are saved. But if it is only that when we are near to death we desire to be saved from the punishment which our sins have deserved —there may indeed be at the last hour a looking to the Saviour, and God's mercy has no end in this life or the life to come, but that is not the *Beauty of Holiness*, that is not what St John was writing of to his *little children* as he called his disciples.

Yet we rightly desire to *assure our hearts before Him*, and to know that we are His.

*Beloved, now are we the sons of God*, St John says, Christ came to show us the Father, to show that God *is* our Father, and we His children, we have not to make ourselves His children—dear children of

God—we have only to look up and see the Father's face.

But *Hereby we know that we are of the truth and shall assure our hearts before Him.* Hereby—by what? The verses before and after show us—by love, by showing love—by so loving that our hearts shall not condemn us—by this *we have confidence towards God.* The disciple whom Jesus loved tells us, over and over again, that love is all—love is the key.

I will read you a verse that I am very fond of—about love the key:—

"LOVE IS THE KEY."[1]

"Love is the key of life and death,
Of hidden heavenly mystery;
Of all Christ is, of all He saith,
Love is the key.

"As three times to His Saint He saith,
He saith to me, He saith to thee,
Breathing His Grace-conferring Breath,
'Lovest thou me?'

"Ah, Lord, I have such feeble faith
Such feeble hope to comfort me,
But love it is, is strong as death,
And I love Thee."

---

[1] From "Verses." By Christina Rossetti. By kind permission of the S.P.C.K.

We read again—*He that loveth his brother abideth in the light. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth.*

Then, if we are unloving, if there is any one we hate, we cannot be in the light, we cannot *assure our hearts*, for we are in darkness. We stumble and fall, we cannot tell where we are going, we can only guess in the dark that the path we are treading leads down into the misery of being shut out from God.

But perhaps we may feel this. I wish to be loving, I desire to walk in the Light of Love, but day by day how often I have unloving thoughts, say unloving words—can I say "I know that I have passed from death unto life because I love"? Can I say "I keep His Commandments"—His commandment to believe and to love? Can we say truly the end of that sweet verse I just read to you, "I love Thee"? Can we rest our confidence on our love to our brother, or on our love to God?

*Hereby we assure our hearts*—can we?

We can sometimes, perhaps, when through God's great mercy, we are led

to a spirit of infinite love and tenderness, a spirit that seems to overflow all around us, and fills us with love to all whom we meet, love to even every little bird or insect that comes in our way, even to every flower, so that we cannot bear to see one broken off and trampled under foot. There are such times, don't you know them?

One feels as if one held one's breath with the very joy of it, as if He, our soul's dear Master, must be very near; *we assure our hearts*, we do not even think whether they *condemn us*. How could they, when there is nothing but love?

But it is not—perhaps it could not be—always so. Then we have just to come back to these other words. *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and gave His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.* God's love, Christ's Cross, one love, one sacrifice.

So then, if we love, we walk in the Light, that is indeed the only way of Holiness. But the *assurance of our hearts* is not there.

Of this we may be certain, that if we

really know His love for us, it will make us full of love to Him and to all around us, yet there is nothing in all Heaven and Earth to *trust* in but *His* love Who gave Himself for us.

# LYSTRA

*And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent on his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked: the same heard Paul speak: who steadfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked. And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker. Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people. Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, and saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them.* Acts xiv. 8-18.

## LYSTRA

THIS is a very interesting story, and the more so the more we know about it.

Paul and Barnabas were travelling in a country where people knew nothing about the one true God; but they believed that there were many gods, and they had stories about these Beings, whom they worshipped, walking about the world disguised as men and women.

There was a story in that country of an old man and woman who were very kind to strangers, though the people among whom they lived were rude and unhospitable and threw stones at any travellers who came that way. And one day, so the story went, there came two strangers to whom the old man and woman were very kind, and gave them a good meal of all the bread and milk and honey that they had in their humble cottage. And then it turned out that these poor, tired, hungry men whom the rude people of the village had

treated unkindly, and whom the old people had made so welcome, were really two of their gods, Mercury and Jupiter. And these gods, gave them two gifts—one a pitcher that was always full of milk however much was poured from it, and another, far more beautiful one, that they should live together all through peaceful, happy lives and die on the same day.

This was an old story, a very pretty story, I think, that was told in the country where Paul and Barnabas were preaching about Jesus Christ, and where they healed the lame man, as we have just read; and so, you see, it was very likely that they should think that Paul and Barnabas were two of their gods—these same gods, Jupiter and Mercury, disguised as men. And we may see, though this was a mistake, how God had allowed them to believe such stories, so that it might not be so hard for them to believe that His Son, Jesus Christ, had come to dwell as a man among men.

We may smile when we read these old tales, yet there was something beautiful in the thought that in any wood, or field, or lane, or even working at farm work,

you might see a man with a strangely noble face, and gentle voice; and though he was poorly dressed and simple in his ways, you might yet find that he was a Being come from a more perfect world than ours, to bring happiness to the good and punishment to the wicked. And people who had heard these tales were ready to hear the words of Christ, "*Inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of these, ye did it unto Me.*"

So Paul told them that, though they had worshipped idols, God had not left them without a witness, that is, without His voice speaking in their hearts. But the witness he spoke of especially was that of the fruitful seasons; and I have been thinking in these harvest days when the cornfields are golden, and the apples are red on the heavy branches, of this *witness of God.* Why should we be less ready to see Him everywhere than these poor people in Lystra?

People know a great deal now about how to grow corn and fruit and about how it does grow, how the seed sprouts in the ground, and how the apple blossoms turn

to apples, but no one has found out what makes them grow, what *Life* is; and behind all our knowledge there is just this solemn mystery, the silent secret place where God works.

If we thought of this, should we not sometimes stand still in a cornfield, or when we are gathering fruit from the trees, or at our meals, not just "saying grace" as if we had to do it (even this perhaps we don't always do), but thinking of the corn, or the apples, or the bread on our tables as something given to us straight from God, reached out to us by His hand? I think if we let ourselves have moments like this, and felt Him close to us, our whole lives would be lived as in His sight, and so perhaps be changed from what they are, made more holy, more beautiful, more blessed.

# PAY ME THAT THOU OWEST

*Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.*

*Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.*

*But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should*

*pay the debt. So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.*

MATTHEW xviii. 21-35.

*Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive and ye shall be forgiven: give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.*

LUKE vi. 36-38.

## PAY ME THAT THOU OWEST

IT seems perhaps that we need not say much about this sad parable, or story, told by our dear Master, for do we not all feel that it is for us—does not each one so feel it? But do we? Ah—perhaps when we read it and think about it. But do we when the time comes in which we are tempted to be like that servant? Tempted, not in the matter of money; and that was not what Jesus meant Peter to understand by it.

He was speaking about forgiving some fault, or injury, or unkindness.

"*Pay me that thou owest.*" Are not these the words we really say when we think so much of what is "due" to ourselves? And when other people slight us, or are rude or unkind, or perhaps gossip about us, and say what is not true, are we not apt to think it almost a duty not to pass it over, not to forgive, but to show that we are vexed?

Some one said to me not very long ago, "I could not pass that over again and again. Do you think I could?" I did not answer at once; then I said, "It takes a little time to do that sum—to multiply seventy by seven."

For Jesus said, as I have just read, "*I say not unto thee until seven times, but until seventy times seven.*"

I know how hard it is. There are no words that seem so difficult to live by, and yet so good for one's own soul in their searching pain, as these words in St Paul's beautiful hymn of charity (which is only another word for the Spirit of Love) *seeketh not her own.* Her own—my own—the very thing I have a right to ask—a right to *seek*—it may be money—it may be kindness, or respect "due to me" as we say—my proper authority or place in the family, my very possessions—my *own?* Self says I *must* seek that. And then if, by God's grace, in a better moment something whispers, "*Love seeketh not her own*"—and if we listen—all the hard fight is over. Somehow we are at peace again, and perhaps there is a song

in our hearts about the ten thousand talents we have owed, and about Him who was moved with compassion, and set us free and forgave us our debt.

Let us pray for this grace, which we cannot win for ourselves at such times.

And let us think how terrible it would be for us if God should judge us as we are apt to judge others—remembering too that He *is* judging day by day, punishing and rewarding day by day. "*With what measure ye mete*," said Jesus, "*it shall be measured to you.*" "*Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.*" "*Give, and it shall be given you; good measure pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom.*" That is, as we should say, into your lap; or as if a woman should hold up with outspread hands a wide apron, and as if, when it was full, she shook it down and made room for more, and then again it was filled and pressed down, and filled again till it was more than full—that is the sort of measure God gives. Don't you know that it is so?

The woman who gives love and gentleness and kindness, who does not think of

little slights, or of what is owing to herself, but, as the verse[1] says :—

> "Doeth little kindnesses
> Which most leave undone, or despise
> For naught that sets one heart at ease
> Or giveth happiness or peace,
> Is light esteemèd in her eyes—"

and who remembers always that great debt that her Lord has forgiven her—does she not have even now and here every day the full measure of blessing *pressed down, and shaken together, and running over?* And the other sort of woman who grudges kind words, who thinks hard thoughts of others and of what they owe to her—is not she even now and here *delivered to the tormentors?* She does not forgive, and so she does not feel the joy of God's forgiveness herself.

We are judged, rewarded, punished every day, if we would but know it.

God grant that we may.

[1] By James Russell Lowell.

# THE WELL-SIDE

*Jesus must needs go through Samaria. Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.) Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come*

*hither to draw. Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly. The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.*

*And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her? The woman then left her water-pot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? Then they went out of the city, and came unto him. In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat. But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. Therefore said the*

*disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat? Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.*

*And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did. So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days. And many more believed because of his own word; and said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.* JOHN iv. 4-42.

## THE WELL-SIDE

LET us think a little about this beautiful story. Jesus was tired. That in itself, those three words, are enough to think of all day long—all life long—Jesus, the Son of God, by whom the worlds were made, for our sakes was tired; so that He knows what we feel when the evening finds us worn out with our work for others.

People make a mistake sometimes in thinking that it was at noon that Jesus sat by the well. I know a lovely hymn in which the words come:—

> "Thou, who didst sit at Jacob's well
> The weary hour of noon."

In the other gospels the hours are reckoned as the Jews reckoned, beginning at six o'clock, or sunrise; so that when we read in the chapters about the crucifixion that—*It was the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the world till the*

*ninth hour*—it means that there was darkness from noon till three o'clock. But it is now thought that St John reckoned the hours as we do, and that when we read here of the *sixth hour* it means six o'clock.

So that this was at sunset after a tiring day's walk, and it is more likely that the disciples would go to buy food then than at noon, because sunset is the time when people now buy and sell in the East; and, you know, fashions and customs don't change in those countries as they do here, people go on doing the same thing at the same hour and in the same way for hundreds of years.

Jesus then, being tired, sat thus by the well. And a woman came out from the town to fill her pitcher with water. She saw Him sitting there, and knew Him by His dress to be a stranger—a Jew—and the Jews and Samaritans hated one another. So when He said "*Give Me to drink*," she did not at once do what He asked. Do you think, "Ah, if I had been that woman, how sweet it would have been to me to lift my pitcher to His lips!" Yet what has He said? "*Inasmuch as ye have done i*

*unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto Me.*" Here He is sitting among us by our well-sides, by our fire-sides. Do we always give all the comfort we can to the souls and bodies of His little ones, His tired ones? There are thirsting souls all about us to whom we may give the water of comfort. Will He say to any of us, "*I was thirsty and ye gave Me no drink,*" "*Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me*"?

"*If thou knewest the gift of God, and Who it is.*" That is the sad thing with us all. If we *knew*, if we saw Him sitting there we should not only have given all He asks of us, we should have asked of Him, and He would give us the never-failing spring of joy—joy for this life amid all its troubles and pains, joy for the endless life—one joy here and there. *We receive not because we ask not. If thou hadst known.*

And then as she stood there and Jesus told her what was so true about her own life, she saw that He was a prophet; so she began to ask Him questions about the right place to worship in. The Samaritans had always worshipped in their own

manner on a mountain near to Jacob's well; the Jews, as you know, worshipped at the temple in Jerusalem in a different manner. Are not many people like her now? Jesus close at hand, all we want is just to kneel and worship Him; and we say, "Is it best to go to church or to chapel? to hear this or that preacher? to take part in this or that service? some say one thing, some another, who is in the right?" Jesus waits beside us, and we do not kneel. The true worshippers are those who worship *in spirit and in truth*, whatever the outward form.

But with all her mistakes, all her want of understanding, how wonderfully the woman must have told the story of Jesus when she left her water-pot and went back to the city. We can fancy her coming into the streets with her eager face and her quick words, "*Come and see; is not this the Christ?*" Many believed on Him even from that tale of hers told in in her wondering joy. Many more flocked out with her to the well-side and said, "*Now we have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world*"—

not as the Jews thought, just *their* Messiah, but the whole world's Saviour.

Do we, who have heard and read so much more than this poor woman, do as much as she did? Do we say, "Come and see; is not this the Christ?" and gather souls to His side? If we cannot tell the wonderful story as she did, we may do it by gentle and holy lives, but I think we should do it by our lips too.

They all begged Him to stay with them; and how beautiful those two days must have been in Sychar while Jesus stayed with them, and they learnt to know Him.

If we turn to the 8th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, we shall see how ready they were to hear Philip preaching, and to be baptised. It must have been very wonderful to them to learn that the Jesus who had sat beside their well had been crucified, and had risen again, and how He was now at the right hand of God, and had sent His Holy Spirit to dwell among men.

One part of the story of the well we have passed over. When the disciples

came back to Jesus with the food they had bought for their supper, they were surprised to find Him talking with the woman. Women, you know, even now, in the East are not thought worthy to be taught, or able to understand any high things. When she went away they begged Him to eat. They wondered when He said, "*I have meat to eat that ye know not of.*" But He was thinking of this poor woman and of the people He had sent her to call, and of the words He would speak to them, words that would be like springs of water to their souls. He was too full of these thoughts to be hungry. His food was to do His Father's will. His very body, that holy body that He took for our sakes, was fed by doing the Will. And to those who love Him it may even be so that they can forget the hunger, or the pain of the body, because their spirits are fed by the joy of serving Him.

May He give us so to be uplifted and nourished by Him!

# OFFENDING THE LITTLE ONES

*And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.*

MATTHEW xviii. 2-6.

## OFFENDING THE LITTLE ONES

THESE are very terrible words. It is well that we should try to learn what they mean. Offending the little ones. This does not mean offending in the way in which we use the words. We say that people are offended when they are displeased, or annoyed, but here the word does not mean displeasing the little ones. It comes from a word that means making another to stumble. So we may think of the first meaning in this way, that if we so treat one of the little ones, a little child, as to make him do wrong, we are offending him, causing him to stumble; and there are many ways in which we are apt, without much thought, to do this.

You know, I am sure, how a little child sometimes gets up in the morning rather fretful and out of temper; very likely because of some small ailment that we don't know of, in the mood that nurses

mean when they say the children have "got out of bed on the wrong side." Well, that little child is cross and rather tiresome, and those who have to do with him—mother or nurse or grandmother—may get vexed and worried in return and speak sharply, and then things go from bad to worse with the little one, there are many tears and troubles, and the tender soul wanders stumbling in rough places like a lost lamb.

But if the mother, by God's grace, the grace she needs day by day and hour by hour, says to herself, "Little So-and-so is not happy this morning; perhaps he is not quite well; I will try to avoid the things that put him out; he shall have some little pleasure, or something nice for his breakfast, or at least I will speak very gently to him." Then the mother is moving the rough stones that might make him stumble out of the way of the little feet.

But there is another way in which we may cause them to stumble, and that is a much more serious matter, and it is a more searching matter to set it right, a hard

matter always, a work that never comes to an end.

It is a terrible thought that we ourselves may be the stones of stumbling over which the little ones may fall on their way to Mount Zion.

Our words, our ways, our very thoughts, our whole life, will either help or hinder them; and it is good often to pause and think, "What sort of mother do my children see in me? What sort of temper? What sort of conversation? Am I the mother I should like them to remember when I am gone? The mother God shows me in my prayers that I was meant to be?"

It is good to watch our words before children, and to say and do nothing wrong when they are by; but this does not go deep enough, for they will know what we *are* day by day.

I think the words about the *little ones that believe* apply not only to children but to all simple and childlike natures, all who may in any way look to us as examples or helpers, and indeed all with whom we have to do who have made one step in the

Christian path. We may help them by gentleness and kindness, by showing the Spirit of Jesus, to walk along the road that leads to the Kingdom; or we may, by little jarring selfish ways or words, put stones of stumbling before their feet. We do not realise how much the souls of those about us are in our keeping.

Does this all seem hard, impossible? But what is the Master's rule? Not to try for great things, but just, as we read at the beginning, to humble ourselves and *become as a little child.* A little child trying to be good—that is all—*that* through the grace of God.

# THE BREATH OF THE LORD

## AUTUMN

*O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all.*

PSALM CIV. 24.

*The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it.*

ISAIAH XL. 7.

# THE BREATH OF THE LORD

## AUTUMN

WE are perhaps more ready to rejoice in the works of God in the time of spring, when the whole world around us is waking up at the call of its Creator, and everything speaks of life and hope, than now in these lovely autumn days.

The colours of the changing leaves are indeed most beautiful, red and russet and yellow, but as we see them whirled away by the wind or floating down in the still, misty air, we cannot help feeling sad. These things speak to us of death and not of life. Those of us who are old think how we too have come to our autumn time; our strength is less, our spirits are apt to droop, perhaps many of those we love have passed away into the Hidden Country; our time cannot be long, winter is coming—our winter, which seems to mean the end. Do not some of us feel like this in these autumn days even though

a beautiful sunset, the red sun shining through the golden leaves, may make us think of those sweet words, *At eventide there shall be light.*

Well, God has made His world to give us thoughts of Him, and the sad thoughts are as good for us as the happy ones.

But let us look a little closer into this autumn world. Is there really any winter —any death? On the branches from which the leaves are falling we may see almost everywhere new little buds swelling. Have you seen? Have you thought of this, and what it means for us? The autumn too means life and not death; our own old age, our failing strength, our failing sight, our white hair—all these things mean life, not death: for they mean that we too are a part of the eternal years, that we too have in us the buds of a new life, the promise of our God.

*The grass withereth, the flower fadeth.* Why? Ah, do you remember that wonderful *because*, that splendid reason? *Because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it.*

So the fading is as much a part of our life in Him, a breathing of His breath, as

the blossoming, as the joy of spring and of youth; and when we look round and see the leaves falling, the last flowers withered, the bracken turning brown, let us even in these things see Him at hand, feel the very breath of the Lord.

Shall we not try to see Him more in all His works, to let His world speak to us of Him. He is so close, so close to us, it needs only that we should open our eyes and see the Lord God walking in the garden or among the trees of the wood; not only in the time of primroses or when the bluebells fill the hollows like pools of shining water, but when the last yellow leaf has fluttered down and a cold wind goes through the branches.

*For the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it.*

# NOT FAR

*Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: because*

*he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.*

*And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter. So Paul departed from among them. Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.*

ACTS xvii. 22-34.

## NOT FAR

THE place where St Paul said these words was a place more beautiful, more delightful than any we have seen.

For the people who lived in Athens, the people who built the temples that he saw round him, and who made the images of their gods, and the altar by which he stood, had more knowledge of beauty, more skill in making beautiful things than people have ever had since. The greatest praise that can be given now to a picture, or a statue, or a building, is to say that it is like what those wise Greeks did so long ago. And they not only made most beautiful things, but they thought about all the mysteries in life and the world, and in the hearts and ways of men, so wisely, that men now are not thought really learned till they have read and tried to understand these thoughts of the old Greek philosophers.

So St Paul was standing on a hill with

the wonderful white temples, some of which are still to be seen, around him, and behind them other hills covered with flowers, where bees make the sweetest honey in all the world.

He was waiting there for his friends to come to him, so that he had time to look at the beauties of the place, and to think how sad it was that men to whom God had given all that skill and wisdom could think that there were many gods, and that they were like these marble and gold and silver images, which were indeed more beautiful than any men or women, because they were like the loveliest *thought* that anyone has ever had, but ah! not like—how far from being like—the true thought of God.

And St Paul spoke kindly to them; he knew that God had been teaching them, that some of them had very wise and noble thoughts, and, using the wisdom God had given them, had come to find out the holiest truth. For one of their philosophers (a philosopher means one who loves wisdom) had said long ago—it seems a most wonderful thing that he should

have done so—that the man who would show himself perfectly good for the sake of goodness only, and not for reward, would be one who was falsely accused, and suffered unjustly, who was scourged and tormented, and at last crucified.

So, as I said, St Paul spoke kindly to those men at Athens, gently, and in sympathy with what they did seek and find; and that is the way in which souls are won.

He told them how the one God, who made the world, and who keeps everyone of us in life from day to day, had led them in this wonderful way to feel after Him in the hope that they might find Him, and had been patient with their ignorance even when they thought a marble image might be so beautiful as to be like a god. He had been patient with His children, but now He wanted them to know that He is closer to them than they had ever guessed: not far away on a shining mountain looking down on the world, as some of them had thought, but close, quite close, to each one.

We have talked sometimes of the

"practice of the presence of God," of the blessedness of *knowing* Him near; but, also, let us remember that whether we try to realise it or not He is "not far" from each one in this room, as he was not far from the Greeks on their beautiful hill.

There were a great many people listening to St Paul, but only a few believed his words, and one of these was a woman. Perhaps it is easier for women to take these thoughts to their hearts; and oh, if we could always remember that God is "not far," and in the saddest, or hardest, or loneliest time just lay a hand in His, how blessed it would be!

> "Closer is He than breathing, nearer than hands and feet."[1]

[1] From Tennyson's "Higher Pantheism."

# CHRIST SORROWING

*Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.) Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby. Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was. Then after that saith he to his diciples, Let us go into Judæa again. And after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him. Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellowdisciples, Let us also go, that we may die*

*with him. Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already. Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off: and many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God wilt give it thee. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world. And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee. As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him. Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him. The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her,*

*saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there. Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, and said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold how he lovea him! And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-*

*clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go. Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.* JOHN xi.

## CHRIST SORROWING

TO us women the story of the love of Jesus for those three in Bethany is very sweet. We are apt, because of the story we read in another place about Martha's *much serving* and Mary sitting still at the Master's feet, to think of Martha as less His friend than her sister. But when I am rather *cumbered*, as she was, I like to think just of the words, *Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus—Jesus loved Martha.*

Can we not picture to ourselves how the sisters, watching anxiously by their sick brother's side, seeing him grow weaker, more suffering, nearer to death, turned at once in their thought to Jesus. Jesus was their friend. He loved Lazarus. He had healed the sick wherever He went. So a messenger was sent to Him to beg Him to come, or rather just to say, "*He whom thou lovest is sick.*" That was enough —that is always enough—to tell Him our

trouble, and leave it to Him to do as He will with it.

Jesus was a long way off—beyond the Jordan; and, if they knew this, how anxiously they would count the hours till their message could reach Him, and then, as they fancied Him at once setting out to come to them, they would say, "Now He is so far on the way, and now so far, and now He will be coming down the road to Bethany," but still, as they watched, He did not come. How could they guess that when He had their message He would stay two whole days in the place where He was? Their hearts must have been very sad and sore as Lazarus grew weaker, and still along that road, for all their watching, no Jesus came. And Death came first and took their brother from them. "Too late, too late," they must have said to one another, "if Jesus had been here our brother would not have died; why did He stay away?" Ah—why did He? This we may ask too, as we may ask why death and sorrow should be in His world at all. We are not answered—here.

So they had to bury Lazarus, and there was nothing more to be done, there was just his sad empty place in the home and where they three had been so happy, and, to make it harder to bear, a crowd of comforters, who surely could not comfort.

Then a messenger came to Martha, busy again perhaps with her household work, to say that Jesus was coming; and she hastened out to meet Him.

The thought that had been all these days in their hearts, she spoke the moment she saw Him, "*Lord, if Thou hadst been here my brother had not died; but I know that even now*—" How like her faith was to that of the mother of Jesus when she said to the servants at the feast, "*Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it.*" I think it was only by women that a miracle was in this way gently hinted. It was not like the pleading of the Syrophenician woman, nor like the touch of His garment for her healing by another, but just a looking to Him, "*Even now*"—even now in the worst extremity of sorrow—"*whatsoever*," she said, "*thou shalt ask of God, God will give thee.*" Martha, the

busy housewife, saw in that moment, beyond the great shadow of death, something, she did not know what, of the infinite comfort God has in store for His children. And how wonderful were the words that passed then between her and the Master. St John, who wrote them down, must have heard them, have heard her great confession of faith, "*I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God.*"

You will remember that when Peter said those words Jesus said, "*Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father,*" and "*On this rock I will build my Church.*"

Mary was still sitting among the crowd of comforters, and did not know that He was there. It may be so sometimes even with those who love Him, those who have *chosen the better part*, that they look for comfort from this one and that one, when it were better to rise up and leave them all and just go out alone to meet the Lord.

And so she did with haste when she heard the whisper, "*The Master is come, and calleth for thee.*" She was quickly at the place outside the town where Jesus had been talking with Martha. She too said

the same words, the words that must have been always on their lips and in their hearts, "*If Thou hadst been here our brother had not died.*" But she had no other words —only tears.

And now we come to the most wonderful words in this story.

*Jesus groaned in Spirit*, when He saw Mary's tears — *Jesus wept* — and *Jesus groaning in Himself cometh to the tomb.*

This sorrow of Jesus, let us think upon it. Surely it was twofold—sorrow for the grief of those He loved; but was it not also something far more wonderful?—the sorrow of God.

*He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father. Jesus wept.*

He had indeed shown already that He was stronger than death—as He would show it now—yet as one with the Father, as Creator of the world and life and death, He sorrowed. He sorrowed for all His creation dwelling in the shadow of death, which darkens all our life—in the mystery of death which must not be revealed.

"Ah! why can it not be revealed?"

we ask sometimes. "Why could not Jesus then have said, 'Do not weep for Lazarus, his spirit is already in perfect joy; if you saw him, you who love him, you would not wish him back'?"

And why, we may think, did not Lazarus, when he was unwrapped from the grave-clothes, say, "Oh sisters, let us never fear Death again; it is the door into Life; I have come back to this dull earth from a land of joy"?

Why are we not told more plainly what the other life is?

Jesus groaned in Spirit, and then He wept, and then He groaned again, and He called back Lazarus from the grave. He knows what a strange thing our sorrow is —so strange to grieve that our beloveds are gone just a little while before into the Wonderful Joy, yet He keeps the secret. This is God's purpose, God's great necessity.

Perhaps life here could not be lived as He means us to live it if the secret were not kept, but that it has to be kept Jesus the Son of God wept—not for Martha and Mary only, but for His whole

sad world who cannot understand, who must not yet quite understand, His meaning.

And when we think of these tears, we too say, as those did who stood by the grave of Lazarus, "*Behold how He loves!*"

# "THE GRACE OF JESUS CHRIST"

*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.* JOHN i. 14-17.

## "THE GRACE OF JESUS CHRIST"

IN these few verses of St John's Gospel the word "Grace" is repeated four times. The word is used so often in the Bible that we do not always think what its meaning is, or rather its meanings.

We find the grace of God meaning God's kindness. His mercy to us, as when we read, *By grace ye are saved*, that is to say, that by God's kindness to us we are delivered from the punishment we deserve, or indeed it may be, punished by Him for the saving of our souls. Then there are those lovely words that have comforted so many hearts in their great need, "*My grace is sufficient for thee, My strength is made perfect in weakness.*" These texts are all about God's grace towards us, His goodness, His kindness, His grace.

But then we also read of grace given to us, *and grace for grace*, which means, I think, that if we use the grace that has been given us more will be given.

And I want us just to think what this grace is meant to be to us.

*The Law was given by Moses;* we are to keep the Law, the Commandments. Jesus says that He came not to destroy but to fulfil, and that those who would follow Him must obey the Commandments better than the Scribes and Pharisees, who were very strict in keeping the Law.

But we must do more than this. *Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ;* our light must shine; the grace given us must shine in our lives, so that people may see that we have been with Jesus, caught some of His ways. We might observe the outward commands, and do no wrong to our neighbour, and even in a way worship God, as the Scribes and Pharisees did, and yet be so unattractive, so ungracious, so unlike Jesus, that we should not win others to Him, but rather just drive them away from religion, as I am afraid many religious people do.

But the grace of Jesus, the grace given by God, what should this make us? So gracious, so loving, so gentle and so gay, so soft-voiced, so ready to see the

best in others, so full of thankfulness for all the happy things in our lives, and so patient with all the wearisome or sad ones. We should have what has been called "The Secret of Jesus." What a lovely thing to have a secret with Him, to know His secret, and to carry it about with us, shining through us, so that we make all the life around us beautiful!

When I speak of these things, I know that I need them as much—more—than you, but what would be the good of my talking to you, if I had not the same needs?

There is a verse I am very fond of,[1] of which perhaps you would not easily understand the whole, but I will tell you about it.

It says that religion should be beautiful.

> "What's that which Heaven to man endears?
> And that which eyes no sooner see,
> Than the heart says, with floods of tears,
> 'Ah, that's the thing that I would be!'"

And then it goes on to describe what sort of people they are of whom those

[1] From "The Angel in the House." By Coventry Patmore. By kind permission of Mrs Patmore.

who know them think and speak like this, and ends :—

> "They shine like Moses in the face
> And teach our hearts without the rod,
> That God's grace is the only grace,
> And all grace is the grace of God."

God give each one of us this grace for Jesus' sake.

# WHATSOEVER HE SAITH UNTO YOU

*And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: and both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come. His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, and saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; ana his disciples believed on him.*

JOHN ii. 1-11.

## WHATSOEVER HE SAITH UNTO YOU

IT is much easier for us to think of our Master as the Man of Sorrows, as suffering and dying for us, or at least as moving about with a tender compassionate face among the sick and sorrowful, than as we have to think of Him in the story I have just read—as a young man at a feast among his friends. He would not, we are sure, sit sad-faced among the happy company, lessening their joy. No, though He knew all that life holds of sorrow, though He saw behind all the merry-making the great sad realities of the world, His sight did not stop there.

We can fancy a wise and holy man either staying away from the feast, and from all feasts, living a life of self-denial and severity, as many of the best men have done, or sitting there with a sorrowful countenance, because, as I said, they saw the sadness of life behind its

joy. But our Master's eyes saw more than this—the joy again behind the sorrow, the great purpose of blessing that God the Father has for all His children.

So He sat there beside His mother, who had always kept in her heart that Christmas time when the story of the Shepherds was told about in Bethlehem, and the wise men from the East had knelt before His cradle.

And though He had not yet worked any miracle, she knew that He was not like other women's sons, and she was perhaps hoping that here at this wedding feast He would show His power by some great sign.

So when she found that the wine provided by the bridegroom for his guests had come to an end—perhaps the bridegroom was a poor man who could not well afford more—she turned to Jesus and said, "*They have no wine*"—it may have been with a look that said, "Now is the time to show Thy power."

But Jesus, we must remember, would not work wonders just to show His power, His miracles must show love too, they

must be to heal, or to bring back life, or to give sight, or hearing, or to feed.

Mary had faith that He would show His power, but she did not understand.

We must not think of the words Jesus said to her as harsh words, such as sons should not use to their mothers. The word "woman" was as if we might say "lady." It is we who have spoilt this beautiful simple word by thinking it a finer thing to be a lady than to be a woman. Womanhood is a far grander thing than ladyhood, and the "*virtuous woman*" better, finer, than any fine lady in the world. And when we read that He said, "What have I to do with thee?" That does not really express the true meaning of the words in the language in which they were spoken. The true meaning was rather this, "What is there in thy thought of this thing, like My thought? the hour for showing My divine power has not yet come."

How beautifully His mother took this gentle reproof!

She just bade the servants do whatever He might tell them to do.

Then Jesus worked the miracle so quietly, so suddenly, that only the servants knew where the best wine came from—*only the servants*—a word of joy and hope for the humble.

The best wine; you remember how the master of the feast, when he tasted it, said to the bridegroom, "*Thou hast kept the good wine until now.*" He did not know, as we so often do not, that the best wine, the best joy of life, comes not through our providing, but is given by the heavenly Guest, if we will but ask Him into our hearts and lives. And when the wine—the joy—of youth and strength, the natural gladness of life, fails us, He has kept still the best wine for those who love Him, even here in our fading years, and at the last He calls us to share the new wine, the ever new Eternal joy of His Feast.

The only times when Jesus showed Himself, while dwelling on earth, as the Creator by whom all things are made, was when He made the wine at this feast and the bread for the hungry multitudes. This makes us think of how He comes to

us in the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper.

And we may have this thought about the mother of our Lord. She was mistaken in the manner of her faith, but it was true faith all the time. So when she knew that she had been mistaken, she still went on believing, and she could still say to others, "*Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it*"—as if she said, "I cannot tell you what to do, I may be again mistaken, but He knows; do what His voice tells you."

We may be like her in this, we may not be able to point out their duty to others, but we can say, "*Whatsoever He saith unto you*, whatsoever His voice speaking in your hearts tells you is right, do it."

And to ourselves also this word comes, comes now, comes always. We cannot say that we do not know what He says, for each one who listens will hear it in her heart. It may be as simple a command as that "*Fill the water-pots with water*," some humble duty near at hand. If so, let us do as those servants did. They

filled them to *the brim.* That is the sort of service He loves, no half filling of the water-pots. Let us listen, listen always for that voice of Jesus; and God grant that whatsoever He saith unto us, unto each one of us, we may do it.

# LOVE AND FEAR—THE LADY JULIAN

*We have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.* 1 John iv. 16-18.

# LOVE AND FEAR—THE LADY JULIAN

THE fear of God is good, but the love of God is far better.

I have been reading some of the beautiful thoughts[1] of a lady whom I count one of my dear friends though she lived more than 600 years ago.

I will tell you something about her :—

She was called the Lady Julian, and she spent her life, as ladies sometimes did in those days, for the love of God, in a little house built outside the walls of a church, a little house which she never left, because she had made a vow, or promise, to leave all the pleasure of the world and live there serving God in the unchanging quiet of this Anchorage, as such houses were called.

[1] From "Revelations of Divine Love" recorded by Julian, Anchoress at Norwich, A.D. 1373. Edited by Grace Warrack. Methuen & Co. By kind permission of the Editor.

We may think that she would have served God better if she had walked sometimes among the pleasant fields, or if she had visited the poor and the sick in their homes around the little church, but this we do not know. I do not think she lived for herself, for in her room or cell there were three windows; one opened into the church, so that she could join in the daily worship there, one into the room where her two maid-servants lived, and one to the outside, to which all who needed help or comfort might come to speak with her.

She spent her time in writing a book full of holy thoughts which she felt had been given to her by God for the comfort and teaching of others; and when I read it, I feel as if I too had stood outside the window of her cell among the grass and daisies in the old Norfolk Churchyard and been taught by her.

She had a living sense of the love of God, and of the need we have to hold fast by this love, and never to doubt—even when we feel most that we deserve to be punished—His forgiveness, which is

always there for us, so that we grieve this *Highest Sovereign Friend*, this *Everlasting Friend*, as she calls Him, if we do not *forgive ourselves*; that is, if we despair of ourselves when we have sinned and repented, and do not joyfully accept His forgiveness.

For, she says, *our dread* (or fear) *of God should be that which maketh us hastily flee from all that is not good and fall into our Lord's breast, as the child into his mother's bosom, with all our intent and with all our mind, knowing our feebleness and our great need, knowing His everlasting goodness and His blissful love, only seeking to Him for salvation, cleaving to Him with sure trust.*

The fear that makes us flee *to* Him and not *from* Him, that is the true fear of God, and, as she also says, it is so *one* with our love that we hardly can separate them in our thought.

She had a vision given her of the Lord Jesus on the Cross which, she said, *stirred the poor soul to think on the endless love, that was without beginning, and is and shall be for ever, and with this our good Lord said full blissfully, "Lo, how that I loved thee"*—as if

He had said, "*My darling, behold and see thy Lord, thy God that is thy Maker, and thine endless joy. Behold and see that I loved thee so much ere I died for thee that I would die for thee, and now I have died for thee and suffered willingly that which I may.*"

So she thought always of the great love and infinite mercy of God; and I can well fancy how some sad one might come and stand outside her window, some one who was tempted to doubt God's forgiveness for sins so great and heavy as his, and that this good and holy woman would speak such words of comfort and of her sureness of God's love, that the poor sorrowful soul would feel that his burden had rolled away at the foot of Christ's Cross, as Christian's did in the Pilgrim's Progress.

*Flee we to our Lord*, she says, *and we shall be comforted, touch we Him and we shall be made clean, cleave we to Him and we shall be sure and safe from all manner of peril.* You like the nice old-fashioned way in which the words come, don't you? they sound so homely and kind. And we like to think of this gentle lady telling others

of God's love long ago in that wild old England. Things are changed now, and life for us all more peaceful than it was then, but still there are sad hearts who are tempted to fear God with a fear that makes them wish to flee *from* Him, not *to* Him; and some of her words may speak to such sad ones still, so that they may learn to feel sure, as the Lady Julian did and loved to say, *All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well. And therefore when we be all brought up above, there shall we clearly see in God the secret things which be now hid to us. Then shall none of us be stirred to say in this wise, "Lord, if it had been thus, it had been full well," but we shall say all with one voice, "Lord, blessed mayst Thou be, for it is thus, it is well."*

*All manner of things shall be well.*

PRINTED BY
TURNBULL AND SPEARS,
EDINBURGH

PRINTED BY
TURNBULL AND SPEARS,
EDINBURGH